

BALSALL HEATH WEST WARD FORUM MEETING – ACTION NOTES RECORDING

WARD: Balsall Heath West	DATE: Thursday 26 th September 2024
VENUE/ VIRTUAL: APNA GHAR DAY CENTRE, 21-22 CLEVEDON ROAD, BIRMINGHAM, B12 9HD	START/FINISH TIMES: 7:00pm – 8:30pm
COUNCILLOR/S: Shehla Moledina	NOs OF ATTENDEES: 23
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Doreen Jones – Neighbourhood Action Coordinator	VISITING SPEAKER(S): Parminder Dhillon & Amir Younas – Private Rented Sector Licensing Team

CURRENT WARD ACTION PLAN PRIORITIES:

MATTERS DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING INCLUDING LOCAL CONCERNS:
<p>1. Welcome & Notice of Recording</p> <p>Councillor Moledina welcomed all to the ward forum and advised that members of the press or public may take photographs or record the meeting except where there are confidential/exempt items being discussed. The Councillor introduced Doreen Jones as the neighbourhood action coordinator for the ward, Preety Sohpal as the new Community Governance Manager for the ward, Parminder and Amir from the Private Rented Sector Team. The police were unfortunately unable to attend.</p> <p>2. Private Rented Sector – HMO Licensing Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Moledina explained there was a street meeting on Villers road not long ago, Cllr Majid was also present, to discuss the Edgbaston cricket ground traffic and HMO issues. The officers at the last meeting were very good and informative. Residents living next to or in between HMO's have complained about issues with HMO's. • Introductions Parminder and Amir, selective licensing working alongside mandatory licencing. An additional HMO is where there are 3-4 occupants unrelated, and a mandatory HMO is where there are 5+ occupants who are unrelated. • There are 48 mandatory HMO in Balsall Heath West and 12 additional HMO's in Balsall Heath West. How can you object to a HMO? – through planning. The team issues the licence and not involved with planning and checks they are compliant.

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Further information on HMOs is listed below

- Additional HMO; [Additional licensing for HMOs | Additional licensing for HMOs | Birmingham City Council](#)
- Mandatory HMO; [HMO licensing | Birmingham City Council](#)
- Selective Licensing; [Selective licensing | Selective licensing | Birmingham City Council](#)
- How to make a complaint; [Report a private housing issue | Birmingham City Council \(metastreet.co.uk\)](#)

Resident Questions/Concerns Raised

- HMO occupants litter and leave a lot of used syringes used to take drugs and many other dangerous things are left which are unsafe. Need dialogue between council and residents regarding complaints.
- HMO's must meet a certain criteria, specific room measurements for all rooms, sprinklers in room, smoke alarms, fire alarms, fire doors, fire exits. Must be checked by the council.
- How many enforcement officers are there to enforce the checks? Once licence has been issued, properties are inspected and if not maintained and criteria not met, landlords are told to comply and make the needed adjustments. They are given a certain time frame to comply and issued fines. If you've witnessed anything untoward, take a picture and send to the HMO team.
- Residents commented that they have been reporting for 2 years, burglaries in the local area, ringing the doorbell with blood dripping down their face fighting amongst themselves, swearing outside, climbing on top of the bus stop and falling on to the floor seriously injuring themselves. Have contacted midland housing and no response, and no response from the council. Resident has been broken into 3 times over the last 2 years, an 80 year old has been burgled. Parminder explained if this is an exempt supported accommodation, they do not require a licence.
- Residents commented there are far too many HMO's in the area. Streetwatch in the past stabilised the problems now they are back. Drug use is now a huge issue in the ward, 8-9 year olds are now becoming gang members. There must be a limit on how many HMO's can operate in an area.
- Resident – when someone puts in an application for a HMO, are all details provided how many rooms etc? – Amir – yes, all checks are made when an application has been made. Licence is approved then visits are done. Until a licence is issued, we have no powers to visit the property. Licence must be

issued before a visit to the property. Resident – how do I object? Planning contacts residents and plans goes online to the website and objections can be made at this stage.

- Resident – what is supported exempt accommodation? Parminder – Midland heart example, have their own rules and regulations. They tell the council we are providing accommodation as well as the support needed for the residents staying there. They claim that money off the council as housing benefit.
- Resident – Youth becoming part of gangs are becoming a huge problem as there is no more youth clubs, centres etc. Need to get the park back up and running but there's no funding for youth facilities. No swings in the park they've been taken down.
- Parminder – if there's an issue with a HMO, licences can be revoked. Residents – not just internally is an issue, outside is not kept well, fly tipping outside. Parminder advised all issues as such to be reported. PRS@birmingham.gov.uk
- Amir – when licence is issued, hefty fines are given if not compliant. PRS team will be spending 6 weeks in Balsall Heath West looking at selective licencing and looking at improving the private rented homes. There will be 30 officers around the area. Email the PRS team of any concerns relating to properties in the ward and they will address these issues upon their visit. Every selective license has a clause of ASB however residents commented that ASB behaviour is not enforced. Anything not covered in 6 weeks, they will come back and will rotate around all the wards. This scheme is only being piloted in 25 wards and there are a total of 54,000 houses to visit.
- Resident – don't think the flats next door are licenced. Amir said any such concerns can also be reported and they will investigate it.
- Residents – with fines issued, is there a success rate to recoup the money back? Parminder only been in the scheme a year, checks have only been done from January. Formal and informal actions are being taken.

Councillor Moledina thanked the PRS Team and commented she will keep inviting if the issue is recurring within the ward.

3. Calthorpe Park Update

- Lots of complaints received about the travellers, arrived around 4 times this year. Cllr Majid has been made aware of this issue. The councillor is in conversation with leadership at the moment, and are trying to tackle this issue.
- Telford had put up barriers and the barriers have been broken down. Therefore, money needs to be invested into something that won't be broken down and get value for money. Councillor Moledina has spoken to councillors around the city and all are facing the same issue. Calthorpe Park in the summer, residents showed concerns in the play area. Cllr was informed that it was on the list for a revamp on the play area however due to the council's financial position, this has been halted/delayed.
- Councillors have been advised to not approach the travellers. Residents reported that travellers are helping themselves to water at the outside taps

of their homes and that someone must speak with the travellers to try and work with them, understanding their problems why they're there.

- Resident – spoke to someone regarding the travellers issue, have been checking on the children if they are going to school. Some of the travellers children are playing outside and not going to school, travellers say their children don't need to go to school. Council is involved with them and resident called the parks department and the police. The police said they were going to check on the group.
- Resident – Councillor met with all in the middle of Cannon Hill Park and Councillor Majid announced that a consultation was taking place on the traffic flow there. As the Edgbaston Road has been lined for gas leaks, a new cycle way is being installed from Cannon Hill Road (A38) blue cycle way up to Moseley. The plans can be found in appendices one at the end of these notes.
- Doreen explained she is the Neighbourhood Action Coordinator for this ward and she was pleased to see residents in the meeting as she's been trying to work with residents of the ward and hoping to get details to move forward. She has been looking at the Ward Action Plan with the Councillor on how to get people onboard and achieve the priorities. There is a regular walking group in Calthorpe Park that meet on a Monday, working in partnership with Birmingham Open Spaces Forum. Sometimes there's 2 people, sometimes 8. Aim of the walk is to connect with local citizens what they would like in their local area. Not a great amount of funding however there are external funding available to apply for and Doreen can help with this. Can help to constitute a friends of group and then look to apply for funding. Can be anything such a coffee morning, friends of groups, litter picking etc. The walk in the park is going well. Over the summer holidays a 7 week activity programme was done across the park, started 30th July and ended 26th August. It was amazing as there was a diverse group of residents, parents, young people and the elderly. Each session started at 10.30am-12.30pm however people lingered as they enjoyed the activities. Royal society of birds, did so many things. 25-30 families attended each session. Something we would like to continue in the local area however community needs to come together to make this happen. Want to set up litter picking groups and if you'd like to volunteer, please contact Doreen on Doreen.Wiffen-Jones@birmingham.gov.uk. Equipment will be provided from BCC. Doreen is the link between the city council and environmental health service. Doreen is constantly contacting the council reporting needles, gas cannisters. More people to engage to make a difference in the ward.
- Resident – there a lot of informal litter pickers. People want to remain anonymous and not constitute a formal group. Residents clean their streets outside their house.
- Peter Jones – coordinator of the friends of Calthorpe park. Contacted by BOSF suggested to set up a friends of group. A meeting took place on Saturday 28th September at the Baptist church to constitute a formal group of anyone who wants to help. Aim is to start to help and see what can be done, question why the swings have gone. If you'd like to get involved, please contact peter on petejordan5556@gmail.com
- Swings were taken down due to ASB and was uncontrollable therefore swings were taken down – allegedly. Doreen will help with any such assistance needed.

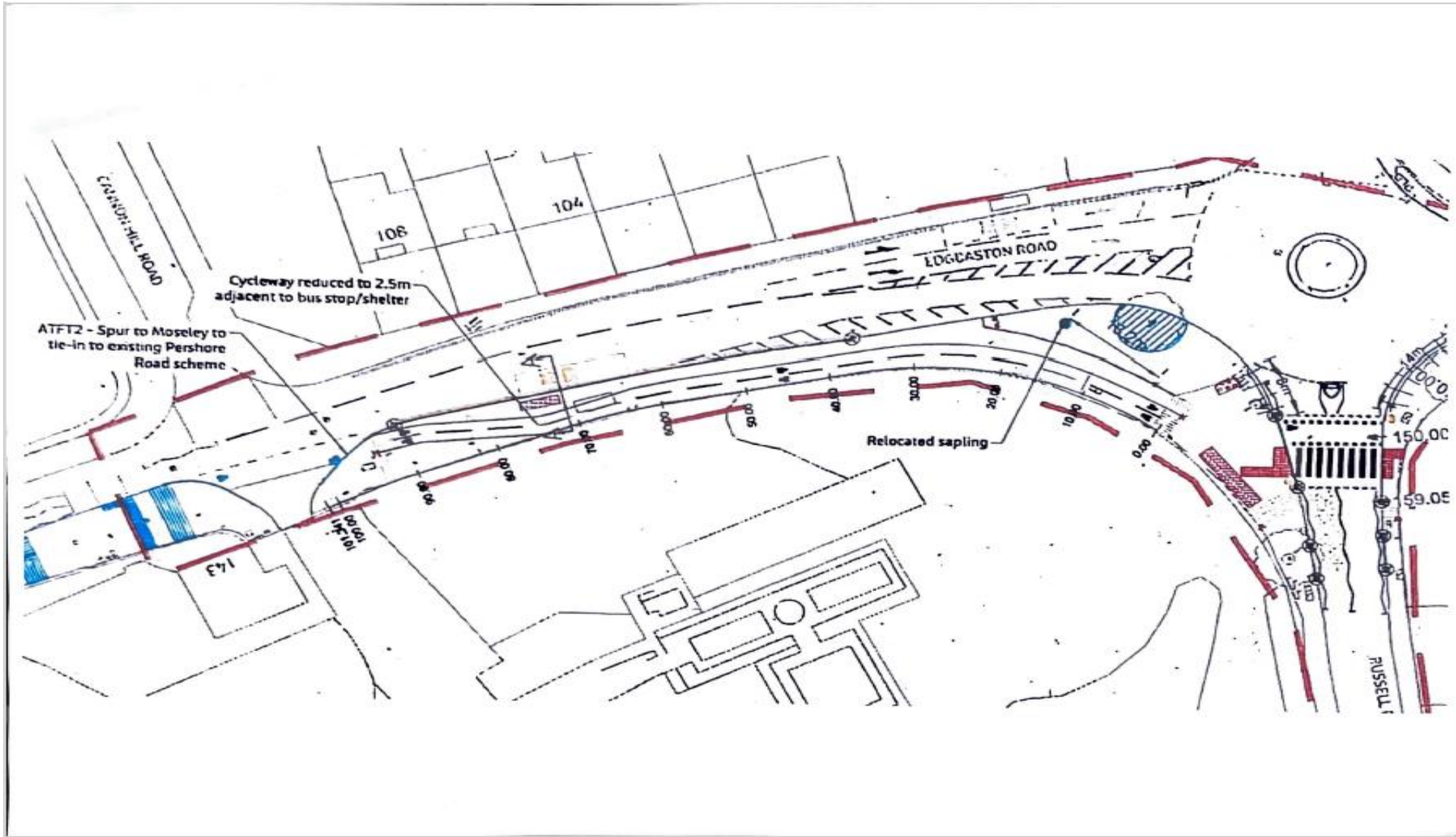
4. Community Safety

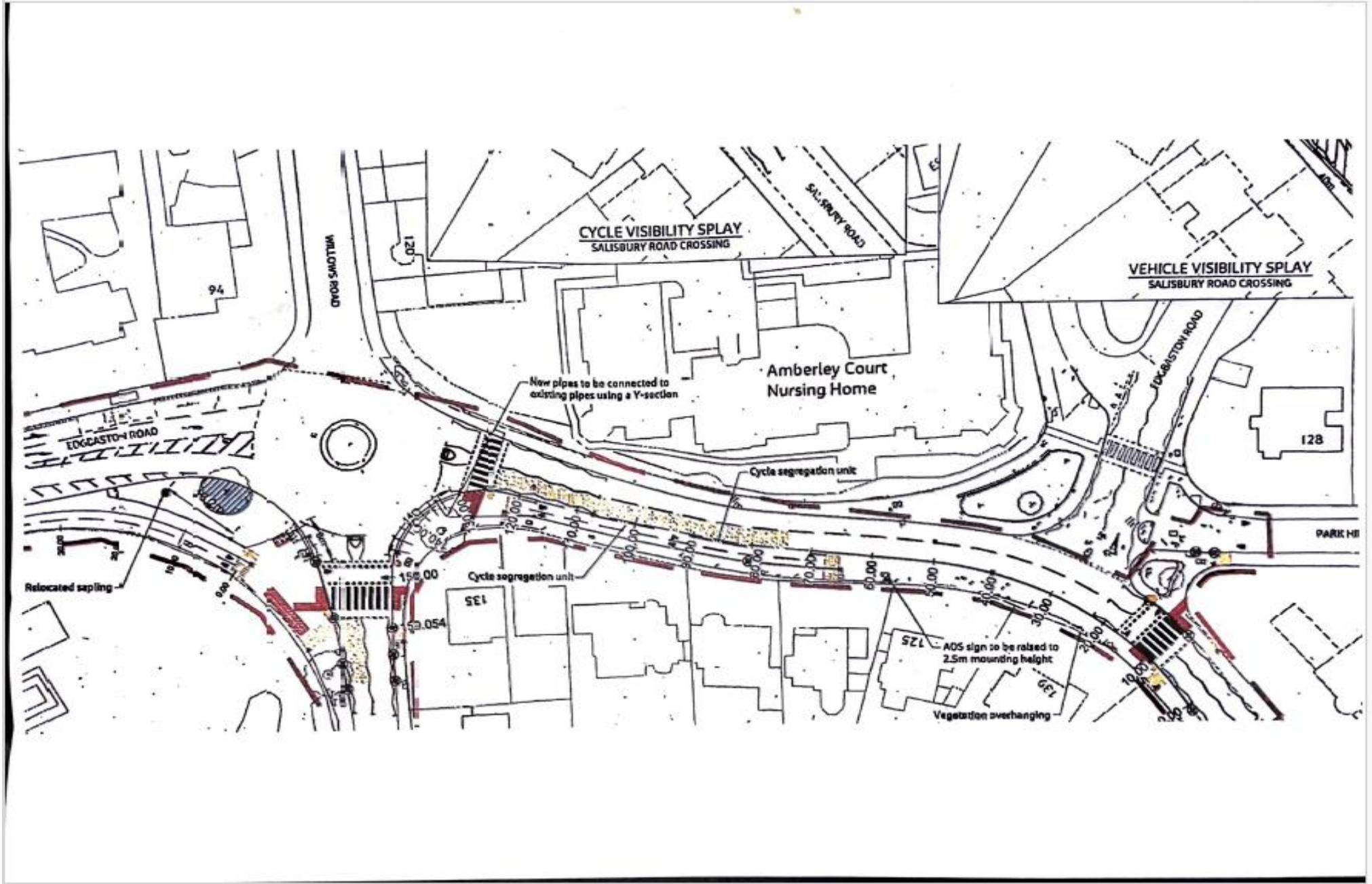
- Police unable to come however will look to set up a separate meeting to address this and have the police.

5. Petitions

- In cabinet, the Councillor can present petitions however can speak for a limited time only. The petitions are looked at, the more signatures the higher the chance of being looked at. There were break out tables at the ward forum, of templates to complete a petition and what it should look like. Travellers is the main issue, get a petition on that, a petition on potholes, petition on HMO's. Make the petition relevant and realistic that can be achieved. The Councillor urged residents to send any petitions or if any assistance and support is required, please contact the councillor on Shehla.X.Moledina@birmingham.gov.uk.

Appendices One





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