



Talk, Listen, Act as a Community

Outcomes from Forum Public Open Meeting



Public Open Forum Meeting 12 September 2022 - Highlights

Huge thanks to everyone who came along to our recent Public Open Forum Meeting at Arden Academy; and to our local Councillors and senior Council representatives for accepting our invitation to speak following receipt of the Local Plan Inspectors' recent letter to the Council that includes findings with significant implications for the KN2 'Arden Triangle' site proposals.

In one of the most packed halls we've ever had, we were delighted to welcome c. 150 residents.

You can read the meeting [presentation slides](#) and also gain a sense of discussions from the meeting [Minutes](#).

Highlights on the main topics are below, along with an update on what's been happening since.

1. Solihull Council Local Plan

Council policy remains that it is committed to the replacement of the new secondary school and provision of a new primary school. The Council is taking legal advice on next steps.

Meeting attendees gave strong support for the Forum's fundamental position that **housing development must deliver community benefits**.

2. St Johns Shopping Precinct, Knowle

This proposal for refurbishment + additional residential units is due to go to Planning Committee shortly.

The Forum is, in principle, in favour of the application, *providing that* car-parking issues - which are a matter for the Council's Highways, rather than Planning, team - can be resolved.

See below re. new Parking Survey.

A **joined-up approach is urgently required** between Council teams and developers.

Development of an overall masterplan for Knowle is essential, given this and other recent new development proposals affecting Knowle; and *prior to* any new housing being built arising from the Local Plan.

3. Funding for KDBH Projects: Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy

The Council is reviewing their NCIL process with a view to creating a non-ward related funding pot for projects across Ward boundaries. This would involve the Council taking a 10% top-slice from non-parished Ward community NCIL funds, which in our case this year would amount to £10,800.

We note that:

- the Council in any case receives 75% of monies raised by the Levy, that it can choose to use in support of wider ranging projects in the Borough
- KDBH is unique as being the only non-Parished Area in the Borough to have a Neighbourhood Forum giving residents a more direct say on development in their community. Solihull Council has no control, or say, in how Parish Councils spend NCIL funds.

The Forum is strongly against this proposal:

- it goes against the fundamental principle, set out in the national planning framework, that NCIL is specifically intended for local communities to choose how to spend, as a way to help adapt community facilities / infrastructure to new development
- the Council has yet to provide examples as to the type of cross-boundary projects that would directly benefit the KDBH Area.

Our Ward Councillors have also expressed their concern at the proposal to the Council.

A decision from the Council is expected shortly.

Until then, the Council's NCIL assessment process has been suspended, putting into question timescales for this year's project bidding cycle.

4. Forum Funding

There has been no government funding for the Forum since the KDBH Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in April 2019. The Forum has prudently kept expenditure to a minimum since then, but resources are now insufficient to continue operating effectively and efficiently.

Attendees registered a high level of support for the Forum to be part-funded via a small percentage of NCIL funds - recognising that the Neighbourhood Plan in any case uplifts the funding received from 15% to 25% of the CIL levy.

5. Notice of AGM

In closing the meeting, residents were advised that the next meeting will be the Forum's AGM to be held on Monday 31 October 2022, 6:30pm at Arden Academy. We look forward to welcoming all registered Forum members - anyone wishing to join as a member can quickly and easily do so via our [on-line application form](#).

What's Been Happening Since the Forum Meeting?



**PARKING!
YOUR OPINION
MATTERS**

Knowle, Dorridge & Bentley Heath Neighbourhood Forum are working with the Knowle Society and Visit Knowle to collate data that will help us assess parking in Knowle.

We'd really like your help in collecting data on parking from the perspective of residents and visitors.

Scan the QR Code to complete the online survey about parking in Knowle



PLEASE COMPLETE THE SURVEY BY 15/10/2022

St John's Shopping Precinct:

This is the most urgent matter, given that the planning application is due to go to Planning Committee, now scheduled for 2 November 2022. We have been working with Visit Knowle (with their knowledge of, and contacts with, Knowle businesses) and the Knowle Society to help create a Residents and Visitors car-parking survey. The aim is to gather your feedback and views on car-parking provision in Knowle, and specifically as this affects the planning proposal.

We encourage everyone to please take the time to take part in [the survey](#) which is open until 15 October 2022. Analysis of responses will feed into preparation for a meeting with the Council to discuss the approach and options for resolving both the short term issue relating to this planning application, and the wider considerations relating to the impact of all the new development proposals now affecting Knowle.

Resident Questionnaire / Views:

Residents had the opportunity at the Open Forum to provide written feedback on a number of aspects under discussion via a short questionnaire. Following the meeting, our analysis of completed responses showed:

Forum Funding Options:

- 88% supported an annual £10 subscription to the Forum
- 75% expressed support for NCIL funding support
- 54% would contribute to crowd funding projects for the community.

These are very heartening results and are much appreciated. The Forum is looking to derive its overall funding from a number of sources, so the above options are not mutually exclusive. We continue our discussions with the Council (ongoing since May this year) to come to a decision on short term funding via NCIL; and are following up with local organisations and Ward Councillors. We're looking to formally launch a campaign for donations in the New Year. In the meantime, however, donations can be made at any time, and are very gratefully received, via the

'Donate' button on our [website](#)

DONATE

Expressions of Interest / Offers of Support:

We are really pleased to see that seven attendees registered their interest in finding out more about / helping with Forum activities. The Chair is now personally following up with each of these individually. Hopefully we may be able to report additional potential team members at our AGM!

Notice of AGM

Monday 31 October 2022, 6:30pm, Arden Academy

While-ever Covid allows, we always very much look forward to welcoming as many registered Forum Members as possible to our AGM. This is an opportunity to ask the Trustees questions related to the business of the Charity - especially with this being the first time since becoming a Charity that Covid finally allows a face to face AGM. As always, we're keen and open to hear your feedback and to listen to any ideas and suggestions you may have on activities and priorities.

Discussions will feed into Trustees' thinking as they shape plans for the coming year. Note that, since our [Constitution as a Charity](#) requires Trustees to be solely accountable for all decisions taken, we will not be seeking to vote on any matters arising.

The AGM marks another important milestone in the year - an opportunity for anyone interested in getting involved in the work of the Forum to put their name forward to join the team.

We were greatly encouraged by the number of offers of support from those attending the Open Forum meeting. Nonetheless, we always welcome contact from anyone who is able to bring their experience or skills to lead or support a particular area of activity - initially as a team member, and potentially as a future Trustee.

Everyone involved in the Forum registers their commitment to maintaining its independence and professional standards of operation, as set out in our Constitution and [Code of Practice](#).