

Digbeth on-street parking consultation

Healthwatch Birmingham welcomes the opportunity to respond to Birmingham City Council's Consultation on 'on-street parking in Digbeth'. As one of a national network of Local Healthwatch, Healthwatch Birmingham is mandated by Government through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to give citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided in their community.

At Healthwatch Birmingham we are passionate about putting patients, public, service users and carers (PPSuC) at the heart of service improvement in health and social care in the city of Birmingham. In line with our strategy, we are focused on helping drive continuous improvement in (PPI) and patient experience. We also seek to champion health equity so that PPSuC consistently receive care which meets their individual and collective needs. We have therefore focused our comments on aspects of the consultation which are relevant to these issues.

Healthwatch Birmingham welcomes the Councils plans to manage on-street car parking in Digbeth in order to address future growth and changes envisioned in this area. We also acknowledge that you have provided alternative methods for the public to respond to the consultation. For instance, locations are available where people can access paper copies of the plans and feedback forms; drop-in sessions where the public can access plans and talk to staff; telephone and email as well as online access. Considering the diversity of Birmingham, we believe that this ensures that people from different backgrounds are able to respond to the consultation and be part of the decision-making process. However, we find the inability to offer the documents in different languages (at least upon request) quite concerning. Considering the diversity of Birmingham city which has 42% of its residents coming from ethnic groups other than white and where 91 different languages are spoken (2011 Census), failing to offer the consultation documents in different languages (at least upon request) excludes some groups from contributing. In addition to this, the consultation does not seem particularly accessible to people with a disability and/or sensory loss.

Our Key Concern (s):

Healthwatch Birmingham has some concerns that we believe the Council should consider before putting these plans into action.

- The documents provided are not clear on whether the Council carried out an equality analysis in this consultation process. Therefore, the extent to which the Council identified the groups that would be affected by the plans outlined



22/06/2018

in this consultation is not clear. A good equality analysis would identify population groups sharing the 'protected characteristics' as defined in the Equality Act and those affected by inequalities (health or otherwise) associated with socioeconomic factors or other forms of disadvantage (i.e. social exclusion and deprivation associated with geographical areas or inequalities or variations associated with other geographical distinctions).

- We believe that the failure to carry out an analysis of the potential impact of these planned changes fails to take into account the real impact on the public that access health and social services in this location. As well as the potential impact on their health and the possible health inequalities these changes might have.
- Specifically, the area under proposal for parking restrictions has a number of organisations providing health and social care services some of which have poor access to public transport, poor access to parking close to their services and operate 24 hours with variable shift patterns. This makes access difficult, both for staff and patients. Access closer to services is made even harder despite a person paying for a permit. As stipulated in the consultation document 'Buying a permit would allow you to park in the marked areas, but would **not guarantee** you a parking space'.
- We believe that a further analysis of how the proposed changes could impact on the health of the population concerned, potentially resulting in health inequities, would provide a greater insight in how to implement the proposed changes.

Yours Sincerely,



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