

# Freemen Community Meeting

**Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**2:00 pm, Wednesday, 9 June 2010**

**Held at: Linwood Centre, Linwood Lane**

Councillors in Attendance

Councillor Dale Keeling
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Councillor Bill Shelton
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## INFORMATION SHARING – ‘INFORMATION FAIR’ SESSION

The following information stands were sited in the room. Members of the public visited the stands and were given an opportunity to meet Councillors, Council staff and service representatives.

<b>Housing Issues</b> An Officer from the Housing section was present to talk about the new Leicester Homechoice System.	<b>Saffron Resource Centre</b> An Officer from the Saffron Resource Centre was present.
<b>Neighbourhood Police</b> Officers from the local Neighbourhood Police force were present.	<b>City Warden</b> The local City Warden was present.
<b>Ward Councillors and General Information</b> Ward Councillors were present and residents were given a chance to raise general queries.	

At the conclusion of this informal session members of the public were invited to take their seats and take part in the formal session of the meeting.

## **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Shelton was elected as Chair for the meeting.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from John Thomson, Neighbourhood Housing Manager.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests that they may have had in the business to be discussed and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Shelton declared a personal non prejudicial interest as he was Chair of the Saffron Fete Committee.

Councillor Keeling declared a personal non prejudicial interest as he was a Member of the Saffron Fete Committee.

## **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Freemen Community Meetings, held on 7 October 2009, 18 January 2010 and 25 February 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

## **5. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGETS**

The Chair agreed to consider the following application earlier in the meeting as the applicant had to leave urgently.

- **Kitchen Equipment, Linwood Community Association Environmental Services, - £2,065**

The applicant commented that the venue was used to service the whole community and new equipment was needed for the kitchen.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and £2,065 be allocated from the Community Cohesion fund subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead from Community Cohesion and the Leader of the Council.

## **6. FUTURE JOBS FUND UPDATE AND HOUSING ISSUES**

Jo Astill, Supervisor, Neighbourhood Improvement provided a presentation on the Saffron and Eyres Monsell's Future Jobs Team and Suzanne Collins, Property Lettings Manager provided a presentation on the new Leicester Homechoice scheme.

Jo explained that the Future Jobs Fund was a Government scheme to get 18-24 year olds, who were unemployed for six months or more into work. She reported that Housing Services had got a bid approved for 100 Neighbourhood Improvement Operatives in December last year.

The Community Meeting was informed that funding for the scheme was received from the Department of Work and Pensions. Jo explained that the aim of the group was to improve neighbourhoods and that the individuals in the scheme were a really diverse group. Jo explained some of the benefits to the individuals involved. These included certificates received, becoming more confident and additional experience for their CV.

Jo showed some of the work that been carried out by the operatives. The Community Meeting was informed that surveys were carried out after the work was completed to see if there were any problems with the work that had been carried out. It was reported that the work carried out had been well received by the public. Jo reported that one of the operatives had found full time employment and four others had applied for apprenticeships.

It was queried whether the Future Jobs Fund would continue. Jo stated that currently there was only three months left and funding to continue the initiative had been applied for however had not been approved. Concern was raised that stopping the scheme would result in a number of young people unemployed and without assistance.

The Chair thanked Jo for her presentation.

Suzanne provided an overview of Leicester Homechoice. She informed residents that the scheme was a new way of allocating social housing. Some of the benefits of the new system included:

- More transparency – applicants were able to see how many properties were available.
- More information – applicants were now able to see all empty properties that were available and there was more information on issues such as the facilities available in the properties.
- Allowing applicants to apply for three properties a week.

- It allowed for a more efficient use of housing stock.

The Community Meeting was informed that there was no additional housing as a result of the scheme. Suzanne commented that currently there were approximately 22,000 properties in the city. There were currently approximately 8000 people on the housing register however there were only approximately 1400 vacancies.

Suzanne explained the steps of how to applying for a property. These were:

- Filling in an application form – these were available from the Leicester Homechoice website, the property shop at housing options, via telephone, through the local neighbourhood housing office and at Customer Service Centres.
- If applicants were eligible they were then sent a registration number followed by a security pin number.
- Applicants then were able to look for and choose properties they wished to apply for from various access points across the city.
- Applicants then were able to apply for properties using one of the four methods available.
- Offers were then made to applicants if they had been successful.
- Results would be supplied to demonstrate how properties had been let.

Residents were informed that the advertising cycle opened on a Wednesday at 6am and closed on Monday midnight of the following week. Suzanne commented that applications were not on a first come first service basis. She explained if applicants refused three offers in a 12 month period then they would be placed on reduced points. They however could be allowed a further three offers depending on the reasons why they had refused the properties. The Community Meeting was informed that people who were currently homeless were encouraged to make three offers and if they did not then this was done automatically for them.

Suzanne explained that there was help and advice available about the new scheme and an access strategy and process was in place for vulnerable persons who may experience difficulty in accessing the scheme. Other housing options advice was also available. The Community Meeting was informed that all documents could be downloaded from the City Council website.

The Chair stated that he agreed that the new system was much better however more housing in the city was needed.

A resident queried why the system was not on a first come first serve basis. Suzanne commented that houses were allocated depending on a needs basis according to the allocations policy.

The Chair thanked Suzanne for her presentation.

## **7. POLICING UPDATE**

Sergeant Darren Little provided a policing update for the area.

Sergeant Little provided the following updates:

- Serious inquisitive crime was reducing in the ward although this was still high.
- A priority had been made to deal with the large number of youths congregating and causing damage on Saffron Lane. Sergeant Little reported that in the last two to three months, anti social behaviour calls had dropped. He commented that way markers had been placed on Saffron Lane and it was currently logged every time an officer went into the area.

Sergeant Little commented that one of the main priorities of the ward was tackling anti social behaviour. He stated that there was a anti social behaviour car which was making a difference. The Community Meeting was informed that two or three people consistent offenders had received anti social behaviour orders. Sergeant Little commented that the Police had implemented a recording system for anti social behaviour which involved keeping an eye on someone who was known to be involved in anti social behaviour.

The Community Meeting was informed that a project had been run in the last few months where a large amount of alcohol had been confiscated. Sergeant Little commented that currently two premises in the area were having their licences to sell alcohol reviewed of which one of these was a large cause of selling alcohol to young people.

Residents raised concern about people drinking in the area and noise until the early hours of the morning. Sergeant Little commented that it was important people rang the Police and reported any problems. It was also suggested that the City Council could be contacted through it's Environment Team if there were any problems.

Concern was also raised about people cycling on pavements and it was confirmed that this was illegal.

## **8. CITY WARDEN**

Scott Clark, City Warden for the Freeman ward was present to talk about the City Warden service.

Scott explained that the City Warden service had now been rolled out across the city and there was now one warden allocated to each ward. It was suggested that joint working between the City Warden and the Police be looked into. Residents were encouraged to submit any environmental problems they witnessed to Scott.

## **9. AYLESTONE RECREATION GROUND FOOTBALL PITCHES**

The Chair provided an update on the Aylestone Recreation Ground Football Pitches.

He reported that football pitches were to be placed on the recreation ground which were to be funded by the Football Association. The Community Meeting was informed that there had been a problem with a gas main on the site however it was confirmed that this should not delay the development too much and any extra cost would be minimum. A finished date of September/October 2010 was being looked at for the development.

It was confirmed that the Saffron Resource Centre had made representations regarding the application raising concerns about the proposed car park and offices. Queries had also been raised regarding the amount of car park spaces were required.

A resident requested more information about the Pavilion development scheme. The Chair stated that it was understood nothing was to be changed to the original plans. He stated that there was a meeting arranged on Friday with the Saffron Young People's project. He commented that there would be a report back at the next meeting regarding the pavilion.

Action	Officer	Deadline
Report back at the next meeting regarding the Pavilion development.	Jerry Connolly, Members Support Officer.	Next meeting.

A resident queried if the running costs for the pitches would be picked up by the City Council. The Chair stated that he was not sure with regard to this. It was agreed this should be checked and an update brought to the next meeting.

Action	Officer	Deadline
Check whether the running costs of the pitches are being picked up by the City Council.	Jerry Connolly, Members Support Officer.	Next meeting.

## 10. VELODROME SITE

The Chair reported that a planning application had been approved for the Velodrome site in 2008 however the development had not gone through due to the recession. There had been another application submitted since for housing. There was also potential to place some housing on the Whittier Road allotment site as it had been derelict for a number of years however some species had been discovered on the site therefore it had been stated that the application may have to be deferred for 12 months.

## 11. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGETS

The Chair presented the Community Meeting budget.

The following bids along with the one considered earlier in the meeting had been submitted for consideration:

- **Independent Education Advice, Peter Thompson, - £2,000.**

The applicant, John Thompson explained the application. He commented that the application would help fund educational advice about school choice. The Chair stated that this was a vital service for the community.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and £2,000 be allocated from the Ward Community fund subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for Front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

- **Saffron Colour Carnival, Saffron Arts Forum, - £2,000**

It was reported that the initial application was for £2,500 however funding for £500 had been found from elsewhere. The Chair stated that the Saffron Carnival was a fantastic occasion that had been going on for a number of years.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and £2,000 be allocated from the Ward Community fund subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for Front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

- **Saffron Carnival Safety, Saffron Arts Forum, - £2,000**

The applicant, Kellie Bugby explained the application. She commented that the application was to make the processes for the carnival safe. The funding was for the costs for the road closures and insurance costs.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and £2,000 be allocated from the Community Cohesion fund subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for Community Cohesion and the Leader of the Council.

- **Dog Waste Bins, Environmental Services, - £4,500**

It was recommended that this item be deferred and it be looked into whether the funding for the bins could be found from the City Council mainstream funding. The City Warden commented that it was understood that the Environmental Services did not have enough funding to maintain the bins.

RESOLVED:



that the application be deferred and it be looked into whether funding could be found from the Environmental Services section at the City Council.

Action	Officer	Deadline
Look into whether there is any funding from the Environmental Services section for dog bins.	Jerry Connolly, Members Support Officer.	Next meeting.

- **Bike Locks, Local Police and Saffron Lane Neighbourhood Housing Office, - £200**

Mary-Louise Harrison, Members Support Officer informed the Community Meeting that the application would be funded across three wards. The applicant stated that funding has already been approved by the Joint Action Group. A resident queried how the bike locks would be advertised. The Police commented that they would be advertised through events such as the Saffron Fete and would cost £1.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and £200 be allocated from the Ward Action Plan fund subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for Front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

The following extra applications were tabled at the meeting:

- **Saffron Fete, Saffron Community Enterprises Ltd, - £1,700**

It was reported that a similar application had been submitted to the Aylestone and Eyres Monsell Community Meetings. The application had been refused at the Aylestone Community Meeting and the Eyres Monsell Community Meeting had agreed to fund 40% of the requested amount which was £680. It was therefore agreed that £1,020 would be supported from the Community Meeting.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and £1,020 be allocated from the Ward Action Plan fund subject to final approval from the Cabinet Lead for Front Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

- **Linwood Fun Day, Linwood Centre, - £175**

The Chair stated that the Linwood Centre was an important centre and provided a good service.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and £175 be allocated from the Ward Action Plan fund subject to approval from the Cabinet Lead for Front

Line Service Improvement and Neighbourhoods and the Leader of the Council.

## 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A resident queried why there was a security guard at the Linwood Centre during the election. The Chair stated that all polling stations had some form of security and information had also been sent to all Councillors providing advice on security.

A resident suggested that information about school academy proposals be brought to the next meeting and that Sally Morrison, Head Teacher of Eyres Monsell Primary School be invited to attend the next meeting to explain the proposals.

A resident raised the following question:

*"The Knighton Fields Centre is the base for Leicester and Leicestershire Arts and Education Service. The Centre is situated in Herrick Road in Freeman Ward (and is used as a Polling Station for the Ward). Saffron Resource Centre is aware that this Centre has provided excellent free support both to the Saffron community and to local secondary schools as well as other support to local primary Schools in past years.*

*What is the City Council financial contribution to Knighton Fields Music Dance and Drama Centre last financial year and this?  
What support has the Knighton Field Drama Centre provided to local (Freemen) schools and to the Freeman community last financial year and this?"*

It was agreed that a response to the question should be raised at the next meeting.

Action	Officer	Deadline
Response to the above question.	Jerry Connolly, Members Support Officer.	Next meeting.

## 13. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 4:00pm.