

Rushey Mead Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Wednesday, 8 December 2010

Held at: Mellor Primary School

Who was there:

Councillor Culdipp Singh Bhatti MBE
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Councillor Ross Willmott (minute 29. – 34.)
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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.

Ward Councillors and General Information
The Curve Theatre
Proposed Play Provision
Watermead Climate Trail

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.

24. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Bhatti took the Chair

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Clair, the City Wardens and Leicestershire Constabulary.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interest they had in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate whether Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

Councillor Willmott declared an interest in item 7, ‘Future Governance of Leicester’, as he was interested in becoming a candidate.

27. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting of Rushey Mead Community Meeting held on 7 September 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

28. WATERMEAD CLIMATE TRAIL

Brian Stafford, Projects and Development Officer, Leicester City Council, gave a presentation regarding a new play trail at Watermead Country Park. This was an educational trail with a theme around Climate and focused on Reduce, Recycle and Reuse. The trail contained play equipment and interpretation materials which were dispersed along the trail to maintain the natural theme of the park. Examples of the activities were monkey bars, balance beams, a Herbivore climbing structure and a climbing wall in the shape of a plane tail fin, all communicating the message of climate change. There was also space for an outdoor classroom.

Consultation for the trail had taken place with local primary schools and the planning application was granted in October 2010. Work on the area would begin on January 2011 and would be completed that year.

The Chair welcomed the trail and commented that the park was an asset to the area and within easy reach for city residents.

In response to a question Brian noted that although there had been no objections through the planning process concerns had been raised regarding the trail.

It was queried if the site could contain a recycling facility. Brian explained that this had been investigated and was not possible due to Biffa's policy that recycling facilities needed to be open access and the park had closing times.

29 ROPOSED PLAY PROVISION IN THE HUGGETS CLOSE AREA

Adrian Edge, Play and Youth Development Officer, Leicester City Council, explained that following the money granted from the Community Meeting consultation was taking place on a toddler play trail by Huggets Close. He reported that residents had expressed concerns that the play equipment would change the nature of Huggets Close and attract antisocial behaviour. Therefore Adrian was attending the meeting to suggest alternatives.

Residents who lived close of Huggets Close felt that the green space should remain how it was and were happy for the equipment to be used in a different space. Adrian suggested that the play equipment on Troon Way or Barnes Close could be increased. The meeting felt that using the funding on Barnes Close would be more beneficial. Adrian explained that information would be sent to the residents of Barnes Close and Huggets Close with the new proposal.

A query was raised regarding anti-social behaviour at St-Theodores Church. In response it was explained that this would have been handled by the police who could report back at the next meeting.

30. FUTURE GOVERNANCE FOR LEICESTER

Councillor Willmott reported that Leicester City Council were to adopt a new model of governance as set out under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. It was explained that there was a choice between a Leader and Cabinet model or Mayor and Cabinet model. A consultation was carried out to assess preference and around 750 individual responses had been submitted. The

views of the Community Meeting would be reported to Council on 9 December 2010 and a decision made by Council at the meeting on 22 December 2010.

The meeting was informed that the role of the Lord Mayor and the elected Mayor were significantly different, as the Lord Mayor was not a political role.

A discussion took place regarding Leicester holding a referendum. Residents felt that a referendum was more preferable to a consultation and that the process had been rushed. It was explained that the electorate of Leicester had not chosen to call a referendum within the last ten years through submitting a petition. In addition Members felt that the cost of holding a referendum was significant. It was explained further that the decision to implement either model had to be made by 31 December 2010.

In response to a query Councillor Willmott noted that he was interested in standing in a mayoral election, however he aimed to present a neutral view to the Meeting. The meeting discussed the possibility of a non-political candidate winning a mayoral election. It was confirmed that a candidate did not need to be associated with a political party to run in a possible election. There was an expectation that the electorate would examine the policies and experience of each candidate.

A query was raised regarding the number of people voting in the possible election. It was noted that in other authorities the turnout had been low; however the possible Mayor election would be held simultaneously to the local election which should increase numbers.

Concern was expressed regarding the low number of people responding to the consultation. Members outlined the responses received from other cities, (the majority of which were significantly lower), and the length of their consultations. In addition it was noted that Leicester had used a number of methods to ensure as many people were reached as possible, including the online consultation, press releases and advert, focus groups and You Tube.

On being asked to choose a model of governance the meeting did not give a preference, although some residents expressed support for a referendum.

31. IMPLICATIONS FOR LEICESTER OF THE PUBLIC SPENDING REVIEW

Councillor Willmott informed the committee that the Government had announced extensive budget cuts to the public sector. It was anticipated that Leicester City Council would need to cut £28 million over four years. He explained that the cuts were difficult to implement and that there would be consultation on where the council budget would be spent.

It was queried if Councillors would take a pay freeze on their allowances. In response it was explained that some Councillor had accepted a pay freeze over the last two years. It was further explained that the previous pay increase had been agreed through an independent panel.

In response to a question the Chair explained that the road works anticipated for the Troon Way junction were funded through a Government grant. It was not known if the grant was still available under the budget cuts, however the information should be available for the next community meeting. Members felt that it was important that this work was carried out.

32. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGET

Steve Letten, Members Support Officer, gave an update on the Community Meeting Budget and reported the following applications for funding: -

- i) **Rushey Mead Library** **£500**
Mrs Odedra discussed the background to the application. Rushey Mead Library had run a number of popular Bhangra step family session and were targeting at all cultures. The sessions had been very well attended, which meant that a larger facility was needed.

Resolved:

that the application be supported to the value of £500.

- ii) **City of Leicester Lady Hoops Basketball Club** **£543**

Resolved:

that the application be supported to the value of £543.

- iii) **Wyvern Primary School**
It was reported that Wyvern Primary School had ask for £1,000 funding for garden equipment to start up a school garden. Children at the school had carried out fundraising to raise money for the project.

Resolved:

that the application be supported to the value of £1,000.

- iv) **Archer Close**
It was reported that residents of Archer Close were concerned that the grass area was being damaged by cars driving over. It was requested that funding be granted for railings around the area. The Chair noted that this issue had been ongoing for sometime.

Resolved:

that the request be supported to the value of £3,600.

- v) **Newsletter**
It was reported that a newsletter was being created to inform residents of the achievements of the Community Meeting and where funding had been granted. Steve Letten, Members Support Officer, was to discuss with Members the final cost of the newsletter.

Resolved:

that the request for funding be agreed in principle following the final cost being discussed with Members.

33. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Residents expressed concern that the community meeting did not cover topics relevant to the location of the meeting within the ward. Residents commented that there were only nine attendees and felt that the meeting would be better attended if it targeted the local area. A resident queried if the attendance figures could be placed in the minutes and suggested that publicity could be distributed locally.

Members commented that as Rushey Mead was a large ward they formed a pattern of meetings and that publicity was sent out.

Specific concern was raised that no one was available at the meeting to discuss the redevelopment of Mellor School and that publicity for the project had been limited. In response Members explained that there had been a number of events and consultation locally and apologised if local residents had been aware of these. Some residents had felt that Woodbridge Road was often sidelined and added that the road was often missed from gritting routes. Councillor Willmott agreed to investigate problems with gritting the road and noted that the school gates were moved from Woodbridge Road for the new school. It was suggested that a meeting could take place to focus on Mellor School for the local residents.

Action	Officer/Councillor Identified	Deadline
Investigate lack of gritting on Woodbridge Road	Councillor Willmott	By the next meeting
A one off meeting be arranged on Mellor School redevelopment	Steve Letten to co-ordinate with the relevant department	

34. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.