

# Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields Community Meeting

**Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**5:30 pm, Tuesday, 16 August 2011**

**Held at: Christ Church, United Reformed Church, Dumbleton Avenue**

Who was there:

Councillor Michael Cooke
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Councillor Anne Glover
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Councillor Wayne Naylor
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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>Skyride</b> Members of the public were able to find out about this event	<b>Recycling</b> Officers were at the meeting to explain the City Council's new recycling scheme
<b>Digital Switchover</b> Information was available on the forthcoming switchover to digital television	<b>City Warden Service</b> The City Warden was available to discuss issues in the New Parks Ward
<b>Ward Councillors and General Information</b> Members of the public were able to make general enquiries and talk to their local Councillors	

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.

## **11. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Cooke was elected as Chair for the meeting.

He welcomed all present to the meeting and introduced himself and the other Ward Members.

## **12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

No such interests were declared.

## **13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

## **14. "WHAT NEXT WITH RIVERSIDE?"**

### **a) Introduction**

Councillor Cooke introduced this item, explaining that discussion on it would be focused on the future of the Riverside site and would not include discussion on the proposals for the development of football facilities at other locations. He also explained that unfortunately neither of the heads of Riverside Business and Enterprise College and Ellesmere College were able to be at this meeting.

Councillor Cooke stressed that the Council was fully committed to consulting on the future use of the Riverside site and wanted the community to interact more effectively with the school using the site, to build up community facilities. It was recognised that many people used the facilities at The Manor House Neighbourhood Centre, but there still was a need for community facilities at this site.

### **b) Future Educational Use of the Riverside Site**

Chetna Patel-Liburud, (Head of Service – Transforming the Learning Environment Strategy), advised the meeting that the Council had a strategic responsibility to ensure that capital finance for children's projects was spent to maximum benefit and that facilities for children and families were optimised. The Council therefore wanted to continue using the Riverside site for educational purposes and had proposed that Ellesmere College should relocate to that site.

The following points were noted:-

- Ellesmere College was a Specialist Sports College and its pupils were challenging learners. Moving to the Riverside site would give them access to on-site sports facilities, rather than the limited sports facilities offered by the College's current site;
- Ellesmere College's current site had no extension and/or development potential;
- Pupil numbers at Ellesmere College were projected to increase. Moving to a better site would enable the College to maintain standards and offer opportunities to be flexible in how it met pupils' needs.

The move to the site would take place in planned phases, during which residents would be kept informed of progress. Initially, the current school on the Riverside site would be decommissioned. For example, furniture and equipment would be related to other secondary schools and arrangements would be made for grounds maintenance.

Site security was a key issue in this, as there was a period of 12 – 18 months when the Riverside site could potentially be vacant. In order not to encourage anti-social behaviour on the site during this period, (for example, vandalism), it was proposed to demolish the existing buildings, probably some time in November 2011. Competitive quotes had been obtained for this and the contractor would ensure that residents in the area were informed well in advance of works, by letter, so that any disruption was kept to a minimum. A daily presence would be maintained on site, to maintain security and safety.

There also would be a formal consultation on the proposal to move Ellesmere College from its current site, as the Council wanted to work with the community on the development of facilities for that site. It was suggested that a community steering group could be established, to help prepare draft proposals by mid-October. The proposals could then be passed to the project's architects by the end of November.

The Meeting welcomed the intention to involve the community in developing facilities for the site and asked what level of funding would be available for this. In reply, Chetna Patel-Liburd explained that this work would be done under the Building Schools for the Future programme, but only limited funding was available through this. Pupils' needs therefore had to take priority, although the Council was interested to see if these could be dovetailed to community interests. The Chair reminded the Meeting that applications to the Ward Community Budget also could be made to help develop such facilities.

The following points were then raised and replies given:-

- In reply to concerns about whether the "green wedge" on the site would be kept, Andrew McGarva, (Operations Director of Miller Construction), explained that due regard would need to be given to planning rules, but the building to be demolished was outside of the green area. The new building was likely to be built in the same place as the old one, so the green area also was likely to remain as it was;

- Efforts would be made to minimise the amount of dust created by the demolition of the existing buildings. It was likely that there could be some asbestos in the current buildings, (for example, possibly as insulation on pipes), the removal of which would be managed carefully;
- It was important that the demolition contractors were required to adhere to conditions attached to permission given for the redevelopment, such as any restrictions on the times during which work could be done;
- Work had been undertaken with the Football Federation to ensure that the redevelopment of this site did not delay, or otherwise adversely impact on, the development of football facilities at Aylestone Meadows;
- As Ellesmere College was a special needs school, it was questioned whether there would be an increase in traffic to the site, (for example, from taxis or minibuses bringing pupils to the school). In reply, it was noted that pupils from across the City could be attending the College, so a co-ordinated approach would be needed to minimise the impact of traffic. In addition, it would be ensured that adequate provision was made for areas to drop pupils off or pick them up, so that vehicles did not block entrances to local residents' properties;
- Riverside Business and Enterprise College had been built to accommodate 900 pupils. Ellesmere College currently had approximately 250 pupils, but the new accommodation would be approximately the same size as that for Riverside College, due to the needs of Ellesmere College's pupils, (for example, the greater number of pupils with physical disabilities);
- Chetna Patel-Liburud explained that the design of the buildings, and resulting flow of pupils, would have regard to the fact that this was a special needs school. For example, the new building was likely to be single-storey, due to the mobility problems of some of the pupils;
- An assessment and review of possible future uses Ellesmere College's current site needed to be made. No decision on this use had been made to date;
- The field off Narborough Road occasionally used by Ellesmere College for sports activities did not form part of the College's site, so would not be considered as part of any proposals for the redevelopment of the current Ellesmere College site;
- There currently was 1.8 metre high palisade fencing round the current Riverside site. Planning regulations restricted the height of fence that could be used, so fencing round the site during its redevelopment was unlikely to be any higher. There currently were no proposals to change the current fence line; and
- Members of the public suggested that it would be useful if a formal footpath in to the site could be created at the point where there currently was a hole in the perimeter fence. The topography of the site was challenging for creating a

footpath, but one solution to this could be to use spoil from the development of the site to improve the terrain.

**c) Future Sports Use of the Riverside Site**

Paul Edwards, Head of Sports, advised the Meeting that two drop-in consultation sessions on the Football Foundation's proposals for the development of football facilities in the City had been arranged. The first would be held from 9.00 am to 12.00 noon on Saturday, 22 July and the second would be from 4.00 pm – 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 26 July. Both would be held at Christ Church united Reform Church, Dumbleton Avenue.

Draft proposals for the facilities on Aylestone Playing Fields and the Riverside school site would be available at the consultation sessions. Wide consultation already had been undertaken on these and the general view was that the scheme was as good as it could be, especially with regard to potential traffic, noise and light levels. Officers had tried to incorporate in to the proposals comments made during previous consultations, but further consultation was needed, to see if it was possible to improve the scheme in any way. Draft plans were available to view at the meeting, although it needed to be noted that these were not to scale.

In reply to a question, it was noted that the Council would ensure that current consultation processes continued, so bodies such as Braunstone Town Council would continue to be consulted.

The Meeting noted that it had been decided not to refurbish the changing rooms adjoining these sites, as the track along which they needed to be accessed was not suitable for use by cars. However, a block of six changing rooms would be built on the existing hard standing.

Access to the Riverside site would be from Braunstone Lane East, as it was wanted to keep the facilities as far away as possible from residential properties.

A member of the public asked if it would be possible for a yellow line to be put down Braunstone Lane East, to avoid people blocking driveways and the road, and to stop people parking on, and possibly damaging, grass verges. Paul Edwards advised that a traffic impact assessment would be undertaken when the planning application for the scheme was submitted. This type of request could be considered at that stage.

The need for a bar at the changing facilities was questioned. It was suggested that some local public houses and social organisations were having financial difficulties, so having a bar at these facilities could take more custom away from them at a time when local businesses should be being helped.

In reply, Paul Edwards explained that having a bar was part of the operational plan for these facilities, but the premises would not function as a public house, as the bar would only be a small area. It was unlikely that people would be able to hire the bar area for private social events, as the facilities were there to provide football activities.

A bar was being included as people using the facilities would include older students and adults accompanying children playing football, or playing football themselves.

Councillor Glover reminded the Meeting that an application for a licence to sell alcohol would have to be made when the planning application for the premises was submitted. The hours that it could operate would be set at that stage and it would lose its licence if it contravened those conditions. Only City Centre venues could be granted operating hours outside of normal licensing hours.

It also was questioned why the Riverside site was being considered for the provision of football facilities, as it previously had not been considered suitable, due to the division of facilities across two sites and players having to cross a busy road to move between sites. The Meeting noted that initially the preferred option of the project's funder, (the Football Federation), was to have all of the facilities on one site. However, it now was proposed that changing rooms should be built on both sites, so that players could change at the pitches where they would be playing. Due to the proposal to have a club room on the Aylestone site, it was proposed that adult football mainly would be played at that site and junior football mainly would be played at the Riverside site.

Ellesmere College would probably use the artificial pitch between school hours, (approximately 9.00 am and 4.00 pm), so would control access to it. Outside of those hours, a member of staff from Aylestone Leisure Centre would open and close the facilities. The Meeting agreed that it would not be suitable for anyone other than the College to control access to the pitch during the times that pupils were on site.

In order to stop unauthorised use of the all-weather football pitch, it would be kept locked when not in use and would be completely enclosed. However, it was recognised that the current all-weather pitch in Braunstone was not locked and was floodlit during certain hours, but no problems associated with its use had been experienced.

#### **d) General**

The Chair explained that the City Council wanted to establish a working group, to include community representatives and the Ward Councillors, which could be consulted at each stage of this development. Anyone interested in joining the group was invited to pass their details to the Democratic Services Officers, either at the meeting or afterwards.

The following general points also were made in discussion:-

- The Riverside site was very important to local people, as there was no official public open space in Rowley Fields and it formed a link to Aylestone Meadows;
- In the past, the Riverside Rangers had worked with the school on the Riverside site to keep access to the river available, but it currently was not very accessible, due to the fencing that the school had had to erect;

- When the development of football pitches had first been proposed there had been concern that the open space there would be lost. A meeting of local residents therefore had been held in June 2011. As a result of meeting on site, the issue of what could be done about the lack of either open space or play areas had been raised and sketch proposals drawn up, but it had not been possible to progress these until the College's aspirations were known;
- The safety of users of the site had always been a high priority and would continue to be; and
- Ellesmere College's desire to work with the community was welcome, as community use of facilities at other school in the Building Schools for the Future programme had been successful.

Chetna Patel-Liburd welcomed these comments and asked that the sketch proposals be made available so that they could be discussed with the Ward Councillors.

In closing the discussion on this item, the Chair invited anyone interested in participating in a community consultation group on the future use and development of the Riverside site to pass their details to Palbinder Mann, Democratic Services Officer, (tel: 0116 229 8814, e-mail [palbinder.mann@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:palbinder.mann@leicester.gov.uk) ).

If anyone had any ideas on how the site could be used or developed it would be useful if they could be passed to the Council.

## **15. BUDGET**

As no applications for grants were submitted to the meeting, this item was not discussed.

## **16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

NOTED:

that further meetings would be held as follows:-

5.00 pm on Tuesday, 18 October 2011

5.00 pm on Wednesday, 14 December 2011

5.00 pm on Tuesday, 14 February 2012

5.30 pm on Tuesday, 17 April 2012

## **17. CLOSE OF MEETING**

Councillor Cooke thanked all present for attending and closed the meeting at 7.31pm