

# Castle Community Meeting

**Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:00 pm, Wednesday, 1 February 2012**

**Held at: The Watershed, Upperton Road, Leicester**

Who was there:

Councillor Neil Clayton
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Councillor Patrick Kitterick
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Councillor Lynn Senior
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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>Ward Councillor and General Information</b> Local councillors were present to discuss general queries.	<b>Police Issues</b> Local Police were present to discuss any concerns or general enquiries.
<b>Jarrom Street Traffic Calming</b> A Transport Officer was available to discuss queries.	<b>City Wardens Service</b> The local City Warden was in attendance to talk about local environmental issues.
<b>School Catchment Area Review / Choice Advice Services</b> An officer was present to provide information.	

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.

## **FORMAL SESSION**

### **24. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Neil Clayton was Chair for the meeting.

### **25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies from Councillors.

### **26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor Clayton declared a personal interest in Item 7 on the agenda 'Student Accommodation SPD', whilst not discussing individual applications, the agenda item was pertinent as there was an application on land next door to his home, and he lived within the map area on Page 21 of the report.

Councillor Senior declared a personal interest in:

1. Her partner was an employee in Highways and Transportation at Leicester City Council;
2. Item 5 on the agenda 'School Catchment Area Review / Choice Advice Services, that for the avoidance of doubt she was on the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee at Leicester City Council;
3. Item 7 on the agenda 'Student Accommodation SPD', whilst not discussing individual applications, the agenda item was pertinent as there was an application on land next door to her home, and she lived within the map area on Page 21 of the report;
4. Item 7 on the agenda, and her partner advised on the transport side of planning applications;
5. Item 8 on the agenda 'Policing Update', that for the avoidance of doubt she was one of three representatives for Leicester City Council on the Police Authority Board.

### **27. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Castle Community Meeting held on 26 October 2011 were confirmed as a correct record.

## **28. SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA REVIEW/CHOICE ADVICE SERVICES**

Glen Sutton from the Choice Advice Services was present to inform the meeting of the support, advice and information offered to parents and carers when they were applying for a school place for their child. The service was funded by Leicester City Council and was delivered by Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL). Impartial advice was given and included school admissions for primary and secondary schools, mid-term transfers, and appeals.

A public consultation on school catchment areas would be available on Leicester City Council's website until 10 February 2012. The consultation was launched on 5 December 2011 in the Leicester Mercury and to schools. School catchment areas had not been reviewed since 1997, since when five secondary schools had closed. This in turn had caused problems for children who had to travel further to another school. The proposals outlined in the consultation would provide a single and secondary catchment school for each address in the city.

Choice Advice Service offered to talk to people if they had any issues regarding the consultation. Information was also available on Leicester City Council's website and at Voluntary Action Leicester. Leaflets about the Choice Advice Service were distributed at the meeting. A copy of the presentation handouts are attached to the minutes for further information.

## **29. JARROM STREET TRAFFIC CALMING**

Steve Warwick from Transport Development, Leicester City Council presented the proposal for the Jarrom Street Traffic Calming Scheme. With the proposed pedestrianisation of Mill Lane, Leicester City Council have requested as part of the planning application from De Montfort University (DMU) the implementation of traffic calming to Eastern Boulevard and Jarrom Street, in the form of 20mph speed restrictions and speed reducing cushions. DMU have offered to pay for the speed cushions, should the pedestrianisation of Mill Lane go ahead. Negotiations with DMU had also secured a Section 106 agreement for improved pedestrianisation (which included The Gateway between Mill Lane and Gosling Street) and cycling facilities in the area.

Steve informed the meeting that DMU had been asked to provide a full traffic impact assessment on Leicester City Council's terms of reference. The only cost to the Council had been officer time in analysis of the data received. It was suggested that a third of current traffic (around 2,000 vehicles per day) would use Jarrom Street, and that traffic calming measures were welcome, and could act as a deterrent to drivers using Jarrom Street. The meeting was also informed the Police had the power to open Mill Lane in an emergency.

Consultation on the proposed 20mph zone would end on 17 February 2012, after which residents had 21 days to raise formal objections with Legal Services. Notices would also be placed on The Gateway, Mill Lane and in the Leicester Mercury inviting objections.

Residents expressed concern over the increase in traffic in the residential area from 7.00am onwards. Steve informed the meeting that a full traffic count on Mill Lane had been undertaken, and that Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) had shown the majority of cars had been through traffic. The information had been fed into a transport model which showed the majority of cars would continue to use a main route and not divert onto Jarrom Street.

Residents also expressed concern that the speed cushions would have a detrimental impact on their cars. Steve explained that the speed cushions in Jarrom Street would be 75mm in height, which was the Government standard. Also the 20mph speed limit would be self-enforcing due to the location of the speed cushions. Residents were also informed the speed cushions were made of pre-formed rubber and bolted into the road, were cheap and quick to install, and required less management and upkeep than previously built cushions.

Councillor Kitterick stated that he was neutral minded on the scheme, but the exhibition at DMU had envisaged that by taking traffic out of the area it would create a better environment, for example, as in High Street in the city centre.

Moving on, a resident asked how many buses were allowed to park on Tigers Way during match days. Steve stated the arrangement was to drop off supporters and go to the Gas Works, returning 5-10 minutes before the end of the game. Six coaches were allowed to park on Tigers Way, but up to 10-12 coaches had been pictures parked up. The issue had been raised by the Police as a concern and was to be discussed at the next Safety Advisory Group, a multi-agency panel.

### **30. STUDENT ACCOMMODATION SPECIAL PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

Councillor Kitterick presented a public consultation draft of detailed planning guidance which would be applied to all planning application for new student housing in Leicester, and proposed restrictions on the conversion of family homes to shared housing in certain areas of the city. The document was available on the Council's website, and the consultation period would end on 14 March 2012. Residents were invited to give their opinions and suggest additions to the policy.

Currently Leicester City Council had no policy to successfully turn down applications for student accommodation without facing legal challenge through the Planning Inspector. Through the new policy, developers would have to meet set criteria. Councillor Kitterick stated that if Leicester City Council had had a policy in place previously, the 22 storey tower built near to DMU would have been turned down due to its height. Since November 2011, Leicester City Council had been operating a temporary moratorium on new student housing. No further applications would be considered until the SPD was agreed after the consultation period. Residents were urged to write in and support the document to add weight when the document was considered. Councillor Kitterick appreciated residents' frustrations, and feelings in that it was too late to reverse some of the decisions that had been made.

Councillor Kitterick informed the meeting that Section 3 (p.11) of the document did not apply exclusively to students, but to any non-related adults sharing

accommodation. Current legislation meant planning permission was only required if the conversion of a family home into shared accommodation was for more than six people. The Council was proposing the introduction of an Article 4 Direction which would require planning permission for more than three non-related people, and was proposing to implement it in Castle, Freeman, Stoneygate and Westcotes Wards.

A resident requested the inclusion of measures for developers to provide adequate parking if housing was converted into shared accommodation. The meeting was informed that planning applications would be assessed with regards to the number and percentage of shared housing, and the cumulative impact on an area in terms of overburden on amenities and changes to the character of an area. Councillor Kitterick stated that the area in Castle Ward near to DMU and the surrounding area had a weakened community, and that Clarendon Park area was in danger of turning that way also.

Residents raised concerns over the illegal car park situated on Filbert Street, which they stated was detrimental to the residential area, blighted their lives and undermined Leicester City Council. Councillor Clayton informed the meeting he had written as a councillor objecting to the planning application and had recommended refusal of the application. He went on to say the application for a car park on Havelock Street had also been opposed by him. A resident stated the car park on Havelock Street had installed lights which lit up his house, and asked if the lights were legal. Councillor Kitterick informed the resident the query would be passed on to officers and he would follow-up the query for a response.

Residents raised concerns over the number of 'To Let' signs in the area with letting agencies details on them, and the length of time they were in position outside houses. Councillor Kitterick answered that signage should be removed after three months of sale or let, and that any longer was illegal advertising. He stated that Leicester City Council officers needed to find a good plan in practice elsewhere in the country around the issue and adopt it.

### **31. POLICING UPDATE**

PC Nick Shipley, Inspector Chris Cockerill and fellow officers attended the meeting, and reported on the following:

- Crime statistics were presented for the Riverside area from November 2011 to present. There had been a fall in all crime, apart from theft of and from motor vehicles.
- Burglary was still an issue in the area, and it was noted that students' accommodation and burglaries were linked, though burglaries had reduced by 30%.
- Anti-social behaviour had dropped by 40% in the Castle Ward, attributed to joint action group work. Four incidents were reported in January, and residents were encouraged to ring number 101 to report anything suspicious.
- 99% of cycles stolen in the Castle Ward were without 'D' locks, with 26 cycles reported stolen in the three month period. 'D' locks, part funded by the police,

were available for sale at £5 at the Central Lending Library and police stations / sub-stations.

- Retails crime was down.
- Praise was given for the SPD and it was hoped this would reduce shared accommodation housing.

Councillor raised the issue regarding metal thefts and endangerment to life in doing so, Inspector Cockerill stated there were opportunist trucks, and specialist thieves who targeted specific buildings, for example, church roofs. Inspector Cockerill urged residents to report anything suspicious, to not descriptions of people, and to always ask for identification of people house calling. People visiting scarp yards with metal would by law have to provide proof of address in the form of utility bill to cash in metal. Residents were asked to close alleyway gates to protect vulnerable pipes from theft. Councillors informed the meeting that funding was available for alleyway gates.

All three councillors informed the meeting they were opposed to the planned EDL march on February 4<sup>th</sup> 2012, and urged the Police to seek to ban the march. The Police's opinion was that it would be safer to allow the march to take place, and the right to freedom of speech had been taken into consideration.

## **32. CITY WARDENS UPDATE**

City Warden Nik Krneta provided an update on issues dealt with by the City Wardens in Castle Ward:

- Over the past three months, 101 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued:
  - 115 Distribution of Free Printed Matter with no licence
  - 86 Leafleting
  - 50 fixed penalty notices for littering
  - 0 Fly posting

The Auditorium in the market had had 12 penalty notices issued for fly posting, at £1,200 plus £400.

- Photos were available for viewing by residents of the Graffiti Clean Up Day on Hazel Street in October 2011, which was also attended by Ward Councillors. Nik was thanked by Councillors, who noted that the dark red paint deterred tags of graffiti artists.
- Litter bins had been installed on Jarrom Street, Thirlmere Street, Grasmere Street, and Rydal Street. A resident requested that bins be installed on West Street also.

Councillor Kitterick enquired if Nelson Mandela Park could be included in future plans for a clean-up event. Residents were asked to contact the City Warden team if other areas were identified that could be targeted as an action day. Nik informed residents that issues around litter dumped in gardens could be dealt with by Environmental Health.

### 33. BUDGET

Councillor Clayton introduced this item of business.

Members considered the following application:

**St Andrews Play Association / St Andrews Tenants Association** – request for £490 to provide a community notice board.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and the sum of £490 be allocated from the Ward Community budget.

**Dawn Centre – Task Force Volunteers** – request for £450 to engage Dawn Centre residents into regular weekly clean up events in the surrounding area.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and the sum of £450 be allocated from the Ward Community budget.

**Avenue Road Primary School – Child Shaped Bollard** – request for £544.75 for the installation of a child shaped bollard to provide a community notice board.

RESOLVED:

that the application be supported and the sum of £544.75 be allocated from the Ward Community budget.

### 34. ANY OTHER BUSINESS



The following items were raised under any other business:

- Residents stated they were still waiting for a playground to be completed. Councillor Clayton stated this was due to the installation of district heating. The works would move to the football ground once the football season was finished, allowing completion of the playground work. People would be able to tap into the pipes, and eventually the system would circle the city. The energy pumped through the pipes was environmentally friendly and the heating could be controlled in peoples' homes, unlike present systems.
- Item 18, Minutes 26 October 2011 - At a previous meeting it was queried whether those in receipt of pensions could qualify for the Handy Person scheme. It had since been confirmed that services are provided free of charge for those in receipt of pensions credit or any mainstream means tested benefit. Pensioners who do not receive pensions credit cannot obtain services for free, but could receive work undertaken by the Handy-Persons Services at a cost of £25 per hour.

### 35. CLOSE OF MEETING


The meeting closed at 8.25pm.





**CHOICE ADVICE SERVICE**



**Supporting Parents and Carers within your Ward.**



**WHAT IS CHOICE ADVICE?**


The service is designed to support parents and carers through the school admissions process. It is free and impartial and includes both Primary and Secondary School Admissions.

The service is funded by the Local Authority and delivered by **Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL)**.




**Supporting Parents with:**

- First time admissions
- Secondary Transfer
- Mid term Transfers
- New to the city
- Appeals process
- Children with SEN (through Parent Partnership)





**How do we deliver the service:**

- Telephone Support to Parents
- Face to Face Support
- Facilitating Workshops to Parents/Carers
- Visiting local School events
- Workshops for local agencies
- Website/email and Social Networking




**We are able to meet for one to one support by:**

- Attending Local agencies (Children's Centres)
- Meet at local Libraries and Customer Centres
- Local Coffee shops and Cafes
- Schools
- Home Visits
- At our city centre VAL offices



**Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN):**

The Choice Advice Service works alongside Parent Partnership which is also based at VAL. This means that Children with SEN can be supported by both contracts to ensure parents receive full support. Both contracts have strong relationships with other agencies in your ward.



## » Targeted support for constituent's

The 22 City Wards



## » Targeted Support for your Ward:



We work within each city ward to ensure strong links are formed with agencies such as:

- Sure Start and S.T.A.R Teams
- Nurseries (both Community and Independent)
- Local Primary and Secondary Schools
- Community Volunteering groups
- Customer Centres and Libraries
- Local Members Surgeries



## » Targeted Support for your Ward:



We aim to understand local issues such as

- Availability of school places
- School Specialisms and building facilities
- Demographics of matches to admissions criteria
- Families on low income (travel and financial restrictions)
- Families with English as a second Language
- Population growth areas



## Building Links with Nursery Schools:



- Engaging with Parents of children starting primary school
- Assisting the LA to identify parents who are not registered for Primary education
- Advising Parents of local Primary schools & facilities



## Building Links with Schools:



- Knowledge of parents needing support
- Understanding facilities and specialisms
- Liaising with Head teachers and Transition Coordinators



## Benefits to Schools and Agencies:



The service is designed to take pressure of support from schools and agencies to allow them to continue with other community and educational needs. We have a diverse knowledge of the city and local voluntary charities. We can share our information and refer parents for help with other issues.



### Benefits to Parents and Carers:

- The support is free and impartial
- Help with completing application forms and letter writing.
- We have a knowledge of many schools and agencies
- We can guide parents through each step of the process and continue the journey with them.
- We can liaise with the LA on behalf of parents who may feel anxious about doing so.
- Support with lodging an appeal and attending the appeal hearing.



### Benefits to Council Members and Local Authority:

- Simple referral system which assists councillors to deal with other community issues
- Reduction in late applications, reducing LA admin costs
- Reducing the number of appeal hearings to minimise financial impact on LA
- Providing statistical information regarding groups and individuals accessing the service to understand the future support needs and barriers faced with admissions
- Promoting Online registrations to Parents to reduce administration costs to LA.



### How can you help?

You can help parents in need of the service by sharing this information to schools, agencies and individuals within your ward. You can also help by identifying and referring constituents to the service, particularly those who may struggle to navigate around the admissions process.



### Contact Information –

#### Choice Advice Service:

Telephone: 0116 2575026  
 Email: [choiceadvice@valonline.org.uk](mailto:choiceadvice@valonline.org.uk)  
 Web: [www.valonline.org.uk/choice-advice-parent-partnership](http://www.valonline.org.uk/choice-advice-parent-partnership)  
 Facebook: [www.facebook.com/choiceadvice](http://www.facebook.com/choiceadvice)

By post or drop-in: Voluntary Action LeicesterShire  
 9 Newarke Street  
 Leicester  
 LE1 5SN



### Further help and support:

Voluntary Action Leicestershire are a key voluntary organisation that acts to involve volunteers and local groups in improving life in Leicester and Leicestershire.

We can offer support to local agencies through:

- Group Support
- Volunteering
- Local Policy matters

 Our Conference and Meeting rooms

Please get in touch to find out more.



### Contact Information –

#### Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL):

Telephone: 0116 2575050  
 Email: [helpline@valonline.org.uk](mailto:helpline@valonline.org.uk)  
 Web: [www.valonline.org.uk](http://www.valonline.org.uk)  
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