

WESTCOTES COMMUNITY MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2022

Held at: Jalaram Community Centre, 2a Westcotes Dr, Leicester, LE3 0QR

ACTION LOG

Councillor Russell (Chair)
Councillor Nangreave

<u>NO.</u>	<u>ITEM</u>	<u>ACTION REQUESTED AT MEETING</u>
8.	INTRODUCTIONS, DECLARATIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	<p>Councillor Russell (as Chair) welcomed those present and led introductions.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Grant Butterworth (Head of Planning) and Adrian Edge (Landscape Development Manager).</p> <p>There were no Declarations of Interest.</p>
9.	LOCAL POLICING UPDATE	<p>The Chair elected to hear the policing matters as the first item of the agenda for consideration of the PCSO, who was on duty and may be called away for business.</p> <p>PCSO Lorraine King was present to provide an update on policing matters in the ward, which were noted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theft was noted to be a seasonal concern, with theft of vehicles, valuables and theft and burglary from commercial properties reported. Members of the public were advised to remove any valuables from cars, ensure vehicles and homes were locked and for lights to be left on in homes. Councillors raised concern over student properties identifying themselves via building plaques, which could make students more vulnerable to theft. ACTION: Chair to provide Sulets contact details to PCSO King.• Bicycle theft was noted to be rising and Leicestershire Police surgeries were being held across the city, to register bikes to a local police database and provide free tamper proof stickers to deter criminals. Further information could be found online on the Leicestershire Police website.• Anti-Social Behaviour(ASB) was noted to be

		<p>an ongoing issue in the ward, with some youths of concern noted to be living in another part of Leicestershire and travelling to meet up in the area. A Public Spaces Protection Order was noted to be in place to prevent street drinking between Westcotes Road and Tudor Road.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCSO King recommended members of the public refer to www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk where members of the public could review the crime statistics in their local area. <p>Councillors enquired about the cannabis factory situation in the ward. It was noted to be an ongoing issue and were most commonly found in private properties that offer 12-month tenancies.</p> <p>The Chair thanked PCSO Lorraine King for the report.</p>
10.	PLANNING AND LICENSING - UPDATE	<p>Grant Butterworth (Head of Planning) provided a written update in his absence, which noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public consultation period of the Local Plan ended in December 2020. • 3500 responses had been received and considered in the finalised version of the Plan. The proposed 6-week consultation stage was expected in January 2023, after which would be submitted to the Government in June 2023 for an independent examination in public, and formally adopted in early 2024. • The Local Plan detailed a need for 39,424 dwellings in the city, of which not all can be accommodated. Leicester City Council had formed an agreement with several districts in the County to assist in the provision of these dwellings and employment land. • 71% of homes proposed were on brownfield sites with the remaining 29% on greenfield sites. • The Plan contained specific policies on climate change, affordable housing, employment, biodiversity, public health and open spaces. <p>Councillors raised concern over the dwellings required for the Plan and emphasised the need for family homes instead of one bedroomed houses for developing a sense of belonging and cohesion as a community. Further concern was raised in conjunction</p>

		<p>with the local Policing report that noted the ongoing issues with cannabis factories in flats and apartments and negligence on the behalf of some landlords in the ward.</p> <p>Members of the public and Councillors discussed the potential future development of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) in the ward, one significantly noted to have built a bedroom in a garage, which had been taken to court twice. It was further noted that the landlord had contacted tenants to ask to continue the build, but a member of the public had advised them to decline.</p>
11.	<p>LANDLORD LICENSING - UPDATE</p>	<p>Tony Cawthorne (Selective Licensing Manager) was present to provide an update on Selective Licensing for Landlords in the Westcotes ward.</p> <p>The Selective Licensing Manager provided an overview on Selective Licensing which highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 310 properties had been identified and obtained licences since 2020. • Since January 2021, legal actions had been taken involving 85 emergency prohibition notices and 104 electrical safety issues identified. • 361 overcrowding assessments had been carried out since January 2022. • The Selective Licensing Scheme was underway within 3 identified clusters, which were a part of the Westcotes, Fosse, Saffron, Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields and Stoneygate wards. • Applications must be made through the Councils website at: www.leicester.gov.uk/selectivelicensing. Members of the public can also check if their property is in the applicable areas. • Discounts were available as a sign-up incentive to landlords, businesses and residents. <p>Councillors discussed overcrowding and the overcrowding assessment process. It was noted that all overcrowding cases will undergo an assessment before being enforced.</p> <p>It was noted that selective licensing staff were trained</p>

to oversee all aspects of a property during inspections before providing a licence, as well as to sign post relevant areas of authority for any concerns they may have about the property in question.

Councillors and the Selective Licensing Manager discussed the discounts available and noted the Gold Leasing Scheme that the Council provides to tenants. ACTION: Tony Cawthorne to provide the link for the Silver, Gold and Platinum Leasing Scheme to the Chair.

A member of the public expressed concern about the ability for properties in the ward to reach the AB or C tiers in energy efficiency. Councillors expressed further concern over any property improvements being sub-contracted out to multiple contractors and leaving residents confused and unaware, resulting in a potentially more expensive process for residents and issues for the vulnerable.

The Selective Licensing Manager noted that the legal limit on for energy efficiency for properties was grades F and G, which were not allowed to be rented out. Grants were noted to be available, such as the Local Authority Delivery grant, in which tenants in receipt of benefits can assist landlords to receive. The Government's new standard was in place to bring energy efficiency in homes to C by 2025.

It was noted that all landlords that signed up to the Selective Licensing Scheme would be provided with ongoing help and advice for any assistance required. All landlords undergoing assessments with the scheme would be worked with to solve any issues and given time to resolve any concerns before a licence was provided. It was noted that the scheme worked with and assessed all properties using the Housing Health and Safety rating system, which evaluated properties against 29 identified hazards.

After an enquiry by a member of the public, it was noted that tenants are responsible for the proper removal of waste and information for waste collection for specific properties can be found online. Any concerns about waste in the ward can be reported to the City Warden for the Westcotes ward, Marlon Gray.

The Selective Licensing Manager noted that after 2.5

		<p>years, the scheme would be analysed to review whether they were meeting their targets. After the fifth year, the scheme would either end or extend for another 5 years if there was noted to be further work.</p> <p>It was noted that there was a legal requirement that a property was properly licensed and that a tenant could potentially request up to 12 months housing benefit back if the property was not licenced. Further information could be found or requested from the Selective Licensing Team online on their website.</p> <p>Councillors were happy with the report and the support the scheme hopes to bring to the community in encouraging families to make their home in the ward and increase community cohesion.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Selective Licensing Manager for the update.</p>
12.	BEDE PARK / UPPERTON ROAD IMPROVEMENTS FEEDBACK	<p>Adrian Edge (Landscape Development Manager for Neighbourhood and Environmental Services) provided a written update regarding the Bede Park / Upperton Road Improvements in his absence which noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 106 contributions from developments within the ward had funded the provision of an adult obstacle course next to the Great Central Way off of Upperton Road. The installation works had since been completed and a contractor for the grass matting surrounding the equipment was awaited. The Project was expected to be completed in early December 2022. • Developer contributions were available to fund further enhancements to Bede Park. • Trees felled along Martin Ryan Walk to assist CCTV in the area in a bid to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour were planned to be replaced in accordance with the Council's tree strategy, and further supplemented along the edge of the play area. The work was noted to be undertaken during winter 2022/23. • Proposals for improvements for the plaza area were in progress, which considered the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Removal of bollards and paving alterations, notably to widen the bottle

		<p>neck junction between the plaza and Martin Ryan Walk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seating would be refurbished with new timber slats. ○ Damaged paving around tree pits would be replaced with resin bonded gravel. ○ The improvements would be carried out over the next few months and expected completion in February 2023. <p>Councillors discussed concerns and methods of management of drunk members of the public in and around Bede Park and Upperton Road. Councillors discussed the relocation of benches on Upperton Road and change of direction of the benches nearest to Bede Park.</p> <p>PCSO King noted that regular patrols were carried out daily in Bede Park and the canal path to identify issues and deter gatherings. Britain Street and square were noted to gather people and further noted that bollards would be replaced to stop cars from congregating.</p> <p>It was noted that groups may be displaced across the ward by police presence, and operations were in place that targeted Bede Park concerns.</p> <p>A member of the public raised concern about gatherings outside of East West Centre at the bottom of Gaul Street and notified PCSO King of a junction near Western Road hosting drug deals, due to ease of visibility down multiple streets at all times of day.</p> <p>Councillors discussed street drinkers outside the Schnapps store. It was noted that two members of the public had reported the issue and displaced the drinkers.</p> <p>The Chair discussed licensing concerns of businesses in the ward and the provision of bags and bins outside of shops for empty alcohol bottles, which may encourage drinkers to gather.</p> <p>Councillors discussed concerns about wet leaves on pavements and roads that may be a health and safety hazard. ACTION: Chair to request a road sweeper to clear fallen leaves.</p>
13.	CITY WARDEN	City Warden, Marlon Gray was present to provide an

	<p>UPDATE</p>	<p>update on local ward issues.</p> <p>It was noted that fly tipping was a priority, with known issues on Equity Road, Walton Street and Narborough Road. Members of the public highlighted fly tipping on Western Road. The Chair noted that the area was underdeveloped and held protected flora. ACTION: Chair to enquire about the owner of the land on Western Road and review whether planning permission had lapsed.</p> <p>Members of the public complained about an overgrown area near the old Benson Beds store, which attracted foot traffic and public urination. ACTION: Chair to contact relevant department to cut back the overgrowth and review the possible installation of a solar powered light in the area.</p> <p>Members discussed the potential of a youth activity area, such as a gym, MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) or basketball hoop being installed in the ward. ACTION: Chair to check for section 106 funding for a potential youth activity area in the ward. The Chair noted that they were working with a local football club to deliver public sessions at Bede Park.</p> <p>The City Warden and PCSO Lorraine King noted issues with businesses dumping commercial waste in residential bins on Narborough Road. Businesses on the road had received notices advising them to keep rubbish contained. It was noted that the City Warden patrolled Narborough Road regularly on Thursdays to regulate the bins in the area.</p> <p>The City Warden requested feedback from members of the public for any changes or areas of concern in the ward.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Warden for the report.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>WARD COMMUNITY BUDGET</p>	<p>The Ward Community Engagement Officer presented an update on the Ward Community Budget as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The total remaining balance was £7,820. • Four applications had been supported this round granting a total £3,980, which included First Tuition for key 1-2 students, Upstairs at the Western Craft Fair, Apnapan Support Group for cancer support in Asian minorities and Hope for Hunger joint application with

		<p>Braunstone for the provision of hot food for those struggling with food poverty.</p> <p>It was noted that a group of litter pickers were active in the Ward on Sundays. ACTION: That Chair to provide litter pickers contact to the City Warden.</p>
15.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	<p>A member of the public raised concern over the traffic issues at New Park Street junction. The Chair noted that highways had been contacted and requested to re-set the recently installed traffic lights, which was noted to be the cause of traffic backing up onto Upperton and Narborough Roads.</p> <p>There being no other business, the meeting closed at 19:28pm.</p>