

Castle Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Thursday, 12 March 2009

Held at: Leicester Tigers Rugby Football Club, Welford Road

Who was there:

Councillor Matt Follett

Councillor Phil Gordon

Councillor Patrick Kitterick

INFORMATION SHARING – ‘CAROUSEL’ 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 the local Police and to bring enquiries and raise and issues.

Table 1 **Ward Councillors**

Table 2 **Leicester Tigers Redevelopment**

Representatives were on hand to discuss the proposed redevelopment.

Table 3 **Leicester LINK**

Representatives were on hand from Leicester LINK.

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

48. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Gordon was elected as Chair for the meeting.

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

No such declarations were made at this time.

51. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Castle Community Meeting, dated 3 December 2008, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

52. LEICESTER TIGERS RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB STADIUM REDEVELOPMENT

Charles Rayner, Leicester Tigers Rugby Football Club gave a brief presentation on the stadium redevelopment, the related car parking proposals, and explained the planning applications made to Leicester City Council. A visual presentation of the stadium following the redevelopment was explained. More detail was also provided on the complicated redevelopment process, the phased process for redevelopment and the next stages, and the need to keep the Granby Halls Car Park open until the new multi-storey car was developed. Finally, it was confirmed that the final completion date for the redevelopment of the stadium was 2016.

Residents raised concerns about the proposed re-location of the hotel, and questioned the impact that the development would have on the local residents and the security problems any raised buildings would pose for the prison.

Charles explained to the meeting that no objections had been received from representatives from the Prison, that a quality hotel was required in the city, that the proposals take into account the traffic concerns raised, that the hotel would be a 10-storey building and that consultation was ongoing with the stakeholders in the locality of the development. In response to questions about potential loss of light to Nelson Mandela Park it was stated that open landscaping to the front of the development was planned, and that the hotel would be designed in a way that would complement, and not hide, the ground redevelopment.

Residents raised concerns about match day parking. In response it was stated that a Travel Plan was being developed and that outside of match day times other uses

would be able to take advantage of the parking facilities available. It was also confirmed that a network of clear signage would be developed on the surrounding roads. It was also confirmed that the Leicester City Football Club and Leicester Tigers Rugby Football Club would not play on the same day in the 2009/2010 season.

In response to concerns from residents about the possible use of Nelson Mandela Park, Charles stated that no plans existed to use or attempt to use the park as part of the overall redevelopment of the area.

Councillor Kitterick, in response to residents' questions about issuing fixed penalty notices to drivers parking on grass verges, stated that the Council is not legally able to issue tickets in to drivers parking fully on grass verges. These had been successfully appealed in the past. A more practical and effective measure would be the use of low-level barriers to prevent drivers mounting the grass verges. Councillor Kitterick confirmed that the matter would be discussed further between Officers from the Council and with Leicester Tigers Rugby Football Club.

53. ADULT SKILLS AND LEARNING

Chris Minter, Interim Service Director, Safer and Stronger Communities gave a presentation on Adult Skills and Learning in the area. The following points were explained:

- That the main educational provision for the area was covered by the Leicester Adult Education College;
- That the Castle Ward had the highest proportion of adult learners in the City;
- That the educational provision included an emphasis on those with mental health and/or learning difficulties;
- That the venue had a good café facility for all users;
- That the courses covered preparation for life and work, basic numeracy, art and design, ceramics, and English for speakers of other languages; and that
- A comprehensive computer suite was available for users.

54. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGET

Kate Owen, Members Support Officer, updated the meeting on the position of the Community Meeting Budget and explained the details of each application.

Funding Application – Delivering Service Excellence

Councillor Follett, whilst supportive of the funding application, wished it be recorded that he was concerned that although the Leicestershire Constabulary had put their element of the Council Tax up by 15% they were still approaching the Council for additional funding.

RESOLVED:

That it be agreed that the funding application for £50 be supported.

Funding Application – Allotment Fencing Project

RESOLVED:

That it be agreed that the funding application for £2,500 be supported.

Funding Application – 100% Best Attendance

RESOLVED:

That it be agreed that the funding application for £350 be supported.

55. CITY WARDENS AND STREET CLEANSING

Barbara Whitcombe, City Warden Manager, gave a brief presentation on the work of the City Wardens and Street Cleansing Services in the area, and in particular covered the following:

- Problems with flyposting, flytipping, discarded needles and graffiti on Cable boxes;
- Castle was performing well against the cleanliness grades;
- Environmental Health teams had dealt with problems of noise and pest control; and
- The City Wardens were introduced to the meeting.

Barbara also explained the following priorities/work areas for the City Wardens:

- Fixed penalty ticketing and legal action against littering, bins on streets, flyposting, and free distribution of printed material without a license;
- Bins on streets - action against occupied properties with the occupant and action to address unoccupied properties with BIFFA;
- Dog fouling – expanding the use of powers in relation to the use of fixed penalty notices was explained;
- Noise complaints

A resident referred to the problems experienced by the local community as a result of the Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI) policy to ban smoking from the LRI hospital site. It was stated that the policy had forced employees wanting to smoke to use the surrounding streets, which had an impact on the local residents. More specifically, it was also stated that residents often could not use their gardens, have windows open, and that noise levels were increased due to the congregation of staff and visitors outside. Finally, and to resolve the matter, it was suggested that the LRI should create a smoking area on their own grounds.

In response, a representative from the LRI stated that their responsibility was not taken lightly but that as a healthcare provider they were required to prevent and reduce smoking where possible. Pro-active actions have been taken to address the issues raised, such as the installation of warning signs, litter bins, regular patrols by hospital security, and regular communications notifying staff of their responsibilities outside of the hospital grounds.

A resident stated further that the local children's nursery was experiencing problems related to the behaviour, which impacted on the children's health.

Barbara stated that if employees were littering as a result of their smoking behaviour then fixed penalty notices could be explored as a deterrent and agreed that more information would be provided to the LRI on this option.

56. ENFORCEMENT

Planning and Development Control and Cleansing Services Officers were in attendance at the meeting and took questions from residents on related issues in the area.

Residents raised concerns about the following:

- Houses of Multiple Occupation in the area
- Unauthorised developments in Victoria Park Road
- The checking process in relation to planning applications that have been submitted
- Takeaways and the hours of use
- Unauthorised extended openings Mobile food vendors

In response it was confirmed that in relation to the unauthorised development the matter had been investigated by Officers once the Council had been notified. In support, Councillor Kitterick explained that if residents become aware of occasions where planning rules have been broken then they must report it for investigation by the relevant department. Councillor Kitterick also explained that where matters are referred for investigation, they are prioritised, and that it is unreasonable and impractical for Officers to conduct detailed checks on all applications due to the sheer volume received.

Officers also explained to the meeting the process for dealing with unauthorised development and the breach of planning conditions. It was also explained that the volume of applications received, bearing in mind that each application has an average of at least five conditions attached, makes it very difficult for the authority to actively enforce all the developments. It was also stated that in reality it was important for residents to report breaches should they be aware of them, and that in future Officers would be prioritising the enforcement of planning conditions.

In relation to takeaways and the hours of use, Officers confirmed they were able to take action but only where demonstrable harm can be identified. Further, it was stated that formal action was not always the best course of action.

In relation to unauthorised extended openings, Officers stated that it was not always straightforward but that residents should report matters as they became aware of them.

In relation to mobile food vendors it was explained that an operating license was required.

57. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Having received a request from residents, and as Chair of the meeting, Councillor Gordon agreed to take 'Any Other Business' before the 'Ward Action Plan Update'.

Residents thanked Steve Letten, Kate Owen and the Members Support Section for their advice and support provided in developing funding applications for submission to the Community Meeting.

58. UPDATE ON THE WARD ACTION PLAN

Kate Owen, Members Support Officer, provided an update on progress towards the Ward Action Plan to date and confirmed that activities were ongoing or had been undertaken to address development, street scene and city wardens, residents parking, adult education and the environment.

Finally, it was also confirmed that the theme for the Community Meetings for the 2009/2010 period was to be Transport and Highways.

59. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.17pm.