

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

5:00 pm, Tuesday, 16 June 2009

Held at: The Grove Centre, Cort Crescent

Who was there:

Councillor Michael Cooke
Councillor Anne Glover
Councillor Wayne Naylor

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** **Highways and Transport**
Officers were on hand from Highways and Transport
- Table 3** **Customer Services**
Officers were on hand from Customer Services.
- Table 4** **Leicestershire Constabulary**
Officers were on hand from the Local Policing Unit.
- Table 5** **Community Legal Advice Centre**
Representatives were on hand from the Community Legal Advice Centre.
- Table 6** **Neighbourhood Housing Office**
Officers were on hand from the local Neighbourhood Housing Office.
- Table 7** **Braunstone Community Association**
Representatives were on hand from the Braunstone Community Association.
- Table 8** **Leicester in Bloom**
Officers from Parks Services were on hand.

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.

43. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Naylor was elected as Chair for the meeting.

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies of absence were received.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests that they may have had in the business to be discussed and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

No declarations of interest were received.

46. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields Community Meeting, dated 10 March and as circulated, were approved as a correct record.

47. HOUSING CAPITAL RECEIPTS INITIATIVE

Ellen Watts, Neighbourhood Housing Manager explained the Housing Capital Receipts Initiative to the meeting. Specifically, it was explained that;

- The money could be spent on property or environmental improvements; and
- A scheme to make sound proofing improvements to the flats in the Gadsby Avenue area was planned for the 2009-2010 year due to a high number of noise complaints from the tenants. This was explained to cost approximately £4,000 per property.

Following the briefing an opportunity to make comments or ask questions about the initiative was provided. None were received.

48. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Jeff Miller, Service Director – Regeneration, Highways and Transportation, provided a brief presentation about the highways and transport department within Leicester City Council, and presented information on highways and transport related issues in the area. The following issues were covered:

- Parking and parking related issues throughout the City and specifically in the Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields ward;
- Speeding Traffic;
- The condition of the roads and footways in the area;
- Public Transport and the new city centre terminus, the Quality Bus Partnership between Leicester City Council and the Bus Companies, quality bus corridors and park and ride;
- The Transport Plan; and

- Verge Hardening.

The condition of the roads in Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields was explained as fair, as was the programme of roads and footways maintenance and the fact that it was a costly programme to manage and deliver. The Rapid Response Team was also explained to the meeting, and in particular it was stated that if a problem with the roads were reported to the Council they would be temporarily repaired within 3 days. The contact details of the Rapid Response Team were also provided.

Residents raised the following points in relation to Highways and Transport:

- What would the cost be to replace the grass with tarmac on Braunstone Lane;
- There were no grit bins obviously available in the area;
- The condition of pavements in the area was not good and there were not enough dropped curbs to enable disabled and mobility buggy users to mount the pavements;
- Raised levels and ridges made it difficult and dangerous for disabled and mobility buggy users to mount curbs;
- Flooding, due to the high water table, created problems on the highways and pavements in some parts of the area;
- The roads in and around the new leisure centre flood whenever it rained heavily; and
- No bus route existed that covered the Sheltered Housing Service.

Councillor Glover explained that the recent traffic calming measures previously implemented on Winstanley Drive has not worked as they had simply pushed the traffic onto Overpark Avenue, which had made the situation worse. Traffic calming measures on Caldecott Road were also not effective and a waste of money. Councillor Glover also stated that the planned measures for Hallam Crescent would create more problems than they would solve.

In response, it was explained that:

- Resurfacing costs currently stood at approximately £7,000 to £13,000 per 100 metres of highway;
- That, in relation to replacing the turfed area on Braunstone Lane with tarmac, Jeff Miller agreed to take up the matter with colleagues and report back to a future meeting;
- The Council relied upon residents and users of highways and footpaths to inform of any problems;
- That, in relation to ease of access to footpaths for disabled and mobility buggies, Jeff Miller explained that Officers have recently been conducting site visits of improvement areas with representative from the VISTA charity in an attempt to understand the issues from different perspectives, and that designers are asked to consider the issues of disabled users when designing new footpaths;
- A disability access group existed in the City, and it may be that they be used to enable Officers to see the matter from a different perspective.

- That, in response to concerns about road safety, Officers were required to consult on this when implementing road safety measures;
- That, if money or additional funding for possible road safety measures was identified for specific areas then it was possible to ringfence the funding pending consultation on the suggested improvements;
- That, in relation to flooding near the leisure centre, it may be that more intensive cleaning of the gully be required and that tree roots were causing further problems; and that
- In relation to the Winstanley Road bumps, it was explained that if it was safe to make improvements to the current measures then the Council will do so. Officers will check the matter and feedback to a future meeting.

Councillor Cooke commented that transport was a major concern in the City, and that flooding and disrepair of roads and pavements have been raised previously as matters for concern. Councillor Cooke also outlined that patch walks, future meetings, and residents surveys would be used to identify further issues that need to be addressed in the area.

49. CUSTOMER SERVICES

Tina Skerritt, Customer Service Centre Manager, provided an introduction to the Customer Services provision by Leicester City Council. The presentation outlined the following:

- How to access Customer Services;
- The Leicester City Council website and the customer services link;
- That access to Customer Services was now also available on Interactive Television;
- The Customer Service Centres across the City, including the BRITE Centre in the Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields ward; and
- The Comments, Compliments, and Complaints provision.

In response to a question from Councillor Cooke, it was also explained that bus passes were available from the Customer Service Centres across the City.

50. RIVERSIDE BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE COLLEGE

An opportunity was provided for discussion on issues in relation to Riverside Business and Enterprise College and its possible closure. The following questions were raised:

- Where are the children going to go instead and why is closure being considered when at a recent awards ceremony Riverside Business and Enterprise College did extremely well and the teachers were recognised as being good?
- Would the local Ward Councillors be coming to the other side of the Ward to take part in the consultation process and to take part in a public meeting about the issue?

In response to the questions raised, Councillor Cooke explained that Riverside Business and Enterprise College has, year on year, seen a steady reduction in the roll and most recently only 29 applicants applied to the school for the new school year. This raised concerns about the sustainability of the school.

Officers from the Local Education Authority were also on hand, and explained that the biggest issue being faced was the fall in roll and that extra funding was being provided to cover the gap between the funding provided to the school on the basis of its intake of pupils and the actual cost to operate the facility. It was also confirmed that after the period of consultation ends a recommendation would be made to Cabinet who would be taking the decision on closure. If it was agreed to close the school, it would be done so on a phased basis, so as to have minimal impact on pupils at the time.

51. WARD ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Steve Letten, Members Support Officer, provided an update on the Ward Action Plan. In particular, it was noted that Environmental Issues, the lack of Community Facilities in the area, and Highways and Transport had previously been identified as priority areas. It was also explained that two Councillors patch walks had already taken place, and a further two were planned in the northern part of Rowley Fields.

Councillor Cooke also explained that the findings of the patch walks would be fed back to the relevant Officers and/or department, along with suggestions for improvement works required. It was also confirmed that future patch walks would be arranged, with the next ones likely to cover the Braunstone area.

Residents raised concerns in relation to the following:

- The travellers in the area, and
- The lack of available transport in the area allowing residents to get to and from Community Meetings.

In response to the matter of transport to and from the Community Meetings, Councillor Cooke explained that the funding was available from the Community Meeting budget to fund and support transport to allow people to participate in the meetings.

Steve Letten, Members Support Officer, also gave details about establishing a Planning Group for social events.

52. BUDGET APPLICATIONS

Steve Letten, Members Support Officer, provided an update on the funding provision made in the 2008/2009 year and explained that Officers were still waiting to find out if any remaining unspent funding from the 2008/2009 year can be carried forward. It was also explained that the following applications had been funded, to date, from the 2009/2010 Community Meeting budget:

- Braunstone Art exhibition;

- Community Event; and
- Ward Transport Scheme.

The following new applications were outlined.

Funding Application – Summer Soccer Academy (Appendix B2)

Councillors raised concerns in relation to there being no indication within the bid how the project would specifically target and benefit children from the Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields Ward, and that for a funding application to be supported this should be clearly demonstrated. Residents were supportive of the views of the Councillors.

RESOLVED:

that the application not be supported at present as more information was required on how the project would specifically target, engage with and benefit the children from the area.

Funding Application – Community Allotment Project (Appendix B1)

Councillors raised concerns about the benefits to the Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields area provided by the project, and in particular noted that the project did not seem to support the local community. Residents were supportive of the views of the Councillors.

RESOLVED:

that the application not be supported based on concerns about the benefits provided by the Community Allotment Project to the Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields area and the lack of clarity about how it would support the local community.

Funding Application – Young Persons Flower Planting Event (Appendix B3)

Representatives were on hand from the Friends of Highway Spinney to explain the funding application. In addition to the information outlined in the application, it was also explained that an educational leaflet would be produced and provided to all children involved in the project. Councillors and residents were generally supportive of the application.

RESOLVED:

that it be agreed that a funding application of £500 be supported.

53. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Residents Concerns

Councillors provided residents with the opportunity to raise any further concerns, not covered already by the agenda. In response, the following concerns were raised:

- It seems that a number of projects and/or services are stopping in the area due to a lack of funding e.g. pilates and the armchair group at the oak.
- Why are the facilities/rooms at the Oak not used?

In response, Councillor Naylor explained that it was likely that projects and/or services have come to an end because funding for the projects/services had finished and no further funding has been found. Councillor Naylor also agreed to follow the matter up with the Turning Point Womens Centre.

In relation to the apparent under use of the rooms and facilities at the Oak, Councillor Naylor agreed to take the matter up with the relevant Cabinet Lead.

Future Meetings

The following dates (and times) of future meetings were confirmed.

10 September 2009	(5.30pm)
16 December 2009	(5.00pm)
16 March 2010	(5.00pm)

It was also explained that the location of the Community Meetings would be varied throughout the area of the course of the year. It was also suggested that more information would be made available on this as soon as the venues have been confirmed.

54. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.46pm.