

Castle Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Tuesday, 2 February 2010

**Held at: Avenue Primary School, Avenue Road Extension,
Clarendon Park**

Who was there:

Councillor Phil Gordon

Councillor Patrick Kitterick

Councillor Lynn Senior

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.

Ward Councillors and General Information Local councillors were present to discuss general queries.	Police Issues Local Police were available to talk about issues or general queries.
Highways and Transportation Officers were present to discuss any highways and transport issues in the ward.	The Future Jobs Fund Details were available of the opportunities through the Future Job Fund
City Warden The City Warden was in attendance to discuss any local environmental matters of concern.	Trading Standards Details were available of the services provided by Trading Standards.
3x30 Fitness Pledge Information was provided about the 3x30 Fitness Pledge.	

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

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Lynn Senior was elected as Chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Senior declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the item on the proposed new health centre as her partner was a Team Leader, in the Transport Development section of the Council and had been involved in planning discussions.

Councillor Senior also declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the item on the proposed new health centre as she used to use the student health centre.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minute 73 – Budget Applications

It was noted that on budget item 3, relating to funding for Queens Road Allotments, the additional funding came from Knighton Community Meeting, not Stoneygate. Further, the funding did not cover the whole of the cost of the installation of the fencing and security, therefore the wording be changed to 'towards funding the installation of'.

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Castle Community Meeting held on 12 October 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

5. BUDGET

Councillor Senior reported that there would be no budget items considered at this meeting as they had only been received shortly before the meeting. Therefore there were a number of details which Councillors wished to confirm before agreeing to consider the applications.

Councillor Kitterick also informed the meeting that there was approximately £10,000 left in the budget and invited people to put in bids if they felt there were suitable opportunities to do so.

The date of next meeting had been moved to enable a meeting to take place to consider any outstanding budget applications. This would take place on 24 March.

6. PRESENTATION ON PROPOSED NEW HEALTH CENTRE

Residents received a presentation from Dr. Pratima Khunti and Jim Hart from the West Hart Partnership architects.

Pratima made the following points:-

- The 9 doctors and five nurses had difficulties operating successfully from the existing premises.
- There was a great deal of demand for health services in the local area which weren't being met – the patient list size was being restricted.
- Several sites had been considered over the past 10 years.
- This site, on Victoria Park Road was the only feasible site, one on Freemens Common turned out to be unviable.
- She hoped that residents would see the benefit of moving to new premises where better services and better disabled access could be provided.
- The 'air-raid' bunkers were the site of the new centre and it was intended to design the new building to be 'in keeping' with the local area.

Jim made the following points:-

- His main role was to mitigate the visual impact of the new building, but it was also an opportunity to invigorate the area.
- The tennis courts to the South West of the site would be improved ecologically.
- The building would be as small a 'site take' as possible and a restricted amount of parking.
- The design of the building would take advantage of the differing ground levels of the site to restrict its visual impact.
- Car parking would be on the first floor roof of the building and a land bank would surround the building.
- A 'suds' wetland would be created to take the water run off from the building in an ecological way.
- There would be considerable focus on the landscaping of the site to further reduce visual impact.

Questions on the following areas were asked:-

The site currently had a lot of mature trees which would need removing, the building design looked 'plastic box' like others in the area and there would most likely be a growth in traffic / parking and access problems as a result of the development.

Jim Hart commented that the landscaping and the design of the building aimed to maintain and improve the quality of the area, the services of a good quality landscape architect had been employed. The 'seeded' trees would be removed from the site, but they would be replaced. With regard to parking, a survey of users of the surgery had shown that few existing users drove to the site and only a small percentage intended to drive to the new facility which meant on average, 1 car every 15 minutes. Access would be through the university, details on this did need working out, but this was found to be preferable to an access from Victoria Park Road which would have created bottle neck problems.

It was queried what was meant by ecology, in terms of improvements to the site?

Jim explained that there would be surveys (ie wildlife survey, bat survey) undertaken of the site and measures would be put in place to allow these to develop and preserve what was already there.

How many car spaces were planned?

There would be approximately 18-20. This would allow for staff and disabled parking. It was also planned to include a drop off point.

What would happen to the current site, could compensatory green space be provided?

This wasn't possible as the site was owned by the University. Green space was being developed on the site of the currently unused tennis courts to the south of the new site.

How was the new surgery being paid for, would the Practice be paying rent, what was the cost comparison between the old and new site?

The Primary Care Trust funded the majority of health centres and for the premises this usually meant paying rent to a third party owner, the University own the current premises. The new site would be owned by a third party, but the development of the site was undertaken at risk by another organisation. The cost of the new site was as yet unknown, costs of the existing could be provided to the next meeting. The District Valuer oversaw these processes to ensure value for money for the public.

Was this a relocation of services or would more be provided at the new site?

The same services would be provided but there would also be more. Patient numbers and services had to be restricted at the existing site therefore more people could be served from the new premises.

What was the role of Assura in the development of the new site, were they providing new services or simply looking for profit?

Assura were the developer of the site and wouldn't receive any payment if the development did not go ahead. The PCT or GPs did not have the capacity to undertake site development, therefore companies like Assura did this. The District Valuer ensured the public received value for money.

It was felt that other public building projects such as Building Schools for the future had been disappointing from an environmentally friendly point of view. What efforts were being made to ensure this building was environmentally friendly?

The proposed building would be built to the 'Excellent' level of BREEAM which was the highest possible environmental rating according to the industry standard. This would include 14% of the energy used by the building would have to be generated on site, which could include solar, ground source heat pump or a biomass boiler.

How big would the building be and what materials would it use?

The building would be 1500 square foot. The materials were yet to be fully decided but it was expected that they would as natural as possible, probably including timber and render. The building would not have a pitched roof to enable it to fit into its surroundings better.

Would the surgery only be for students and university staff?

This was definitely not the case, it was a community facility and patients who were non-students were strongly welcomed.

The site on Freemans Common would have been more appropriate as it was a brownfield site and was due to be developed as a Fire Station.

This site was part of the University estate and was not available for use as a health centre. The health centre would have taken up the whole of the site.

It was felt that the car parking requirements had been underestimated and that there was definitely a need for a drop off point for elderly / infirm people.

Jim agreed with the need for a drop off point, there may even be two, one with access through the university and another on Victoria Park Road. There were currently national planning restrictions on the amount of parking which could be provided in developments, this would guide how much would be provided. He also noted that of the demographic which would use the surgery, there would be a low level of car ownership.

Councillor Kitterick thanked the architects, developers and representatives from existing Health Centre for attending the meeting. The Health Centre would need to go through the planning process and representations on the planning application could be made to the Planning Management and Delivery Section of the Council, contact details below.

Jim Hart also encouraged people to get in touch if they had any further comments on the design of the building which he could see if they could be incorporated.

Contact details for comments on any future planning application.

Planning Management & Delivery
Leicester City Council
New Walk Centre A8
Welford Place
Leicester LE1 6ZG

planning@leicester.gov.uk

(0116) 252 7249.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
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Provide details of rental costs of existing premises.	Samantha Rogers	March 2009 – see below
Provide contact details for residents to make further comments on the design of the building.		

Cost of rent for current health centre premises

Samantha Rogers, Practice Manager provided the following information:-

The rental that was currently paid was for a building that was far too small, was not fit for purpose, was poorly maintained, was inadequately cleaned, didn't meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements and was discounted as it was historically part of the University. This needed to be considered when comparing with any future rental costs. Unless the rental for all practices could be placed alongside with the number of patients they served it didn't bear any relation.

Contact details for further comments on design of building

Please forward any comments to:

matthew.reeves@leicester.gov.uk

Matthew Reeves
Town Hall
Town Hall Square
Leicester
LE1 9BG

Any comments will be forwarded to the developers.

7. BINS ON STREETS

Barbara Whitcombe, City Warden Manager introduced this item. She informed the meeting that the City Wardens would be undertaking an exercise to work with residents to reduce the number of bins left on streets. She asked people to nominate streets which had particular problems which could be looked into first.

Residents raised points on a number of issues.

General Waste / Local Environmental Issues

A local resident raised a number of points with regard to waste / environmental issues in general as follows:-

- He felt the area was becoming a 'student ghetto' and there were problems with absentee landlords.
- There were problems on all streets with bins on streets, recycling boxes on streets, and a lack of appropriate maintenance of houses.
- With regard to fines for bins on streets, he felt that these would be ineffective as the population was highly transient.
- He felt that publicity campaigns were largely ignored.

- Incentives should be considered to encourage responsible behaviour.
- Additional refuse collectors should be employed to place bins back in alleyways and onto property frontages.
- Recycling boxes were ugly and big and added to the problems of untidy streets, canvas bags should be used.
- Student landlords should face greater regulation.

Barbara Whitcombe in response explained that the Council did work with the universities to create a register of student landlords who met certain criteria. Students were encouraged to use these landlords. Environmental Health Officers and Planning Enforcement Officers could also deal with individual problems as they arose. She also suggested that bins and recycling boxes strewn on the street could be reported to the City Warden who would look into the matter.

The resident felt that these measures were not sufficient to deal with the problems in Clarendon Park.

Councillor Kitterick commented that legislation was being introduced which required much tighter regulation, such as planning permission on houses which contained more than three unrelated people. This wouldn't however be retrospective and apply to houses which were already let to more than three persons.

Waste Collection

A resident commented that an issue was raised at a previous meeting with regard to the street sweepers who swept the just before the bins and recycling boxes were emptied. It was felt that it would make sense for the sweepers to go round after the bin collection to remove any detritus left over from that process. Barbara Whitcombe agreed to look into this.

Bin Project

City Warden, Craig Bodsworth explained the process being undertaken with the bin project.

- A letter would be delivered to all houses in the street outlining the plan to remove bins from streets and giving advice on options.
- This will be every terraced street in Clarendon Park from Victoria Park Road to Greenhill Road.
- Patrols would then be undertaken and calling cards would be delivered and residents spoken to where the bin was still on the street.
- If this didn't work and there was still a problem, the names of the residents would be obtained and a letter would be written to the house.
- If there were still problems following this, a formal notice would be issued.
- If there was still no compliance, then all the adults in the house would receive a fine.
- Craig commented that this scheme had worked well in Jarrom Street / Burnmoor Street.

A resident queried whether this would be a one off project or would it still be in place to tackle the problems when students leave in the summer? Barbara Whitcombe said

that officers did attend freshers fairs and delivered leaflets before students left advising them of the bulky waste collection service. It was intended to be an ongoing project, which would be possible due to the recruitment of more City Wardens.

A resident commented that the process seemed to take too long and was too polite. He also felt that the Jarrom Street area still had problems with rubbish on the streets. Craig commented that there definitely had been an improvement in that area. Further he stated that the process was a legal requirement. Councillor Kitterick supported this point, noting that there could be unfavourable media interest if the correct procedure wasn't followed.

Wellington Street

A resident noted that there was a particular problem on Wellington Street in the city centre with the large commercial bins being left on the street and taking up most of the pavement. It was requested that this be looked into.

Absent Landlords / Foreign Students

It was felt that foreign students were unaware of their responsibilities. Barbara Whitcombe explained that translators were used where there were language difficulties.

It was also queried whether landlords were chased for unpaid Council Tax? Barbara said that this did happen, but it was often difficult to track landlords down. They would often not even live in this country. A resident suggested using the land registry or lettings agents.

University of Leicester - Community Warden

Edmund Hockley, the University of Leicester Community Warden introduced himself to the meeting. He explained his role which could help cover the following areas:-

- Providing assistance to students living in poor accommodation, how to tackle landlords. There had been no complaints against landlords who were registered.
- Bins - he was keen to assist in educating students of their responsibilities. He was looking into getting this information on the front page of the student website. Posters were also being displayed around the campus.
- He offered to let people contact him about student properties which were causing a problem. Disciplinary action could be taken against the students which could lead to them not graduating.
- With regard to foreign students, he noted that all course were taught in English and translation shouldn't be an issue.

The Chair felt that it would be useful for Edmund to come and speak to the meeting on a more detailed basis at a future meeting.

Neighbours

A resident addressed the meeting, commenting that he took the time to get to know

his neighbours. As a result they all looked out for each other and moved bins back into alleyways once they'd been emptied. He felt that this worked well and could be done by everyone.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
See if street sweeper vans could clear the streets after the bin collections had taken place.	Barbara Whitcombe	March 2010
See if industrial bins could be removed from the street at the top end of Wellington Street.	Barbara Whitcombe	March 2010

8. THE FUTURE JOBS FUND

Trevor Mee, Business Development Manager was in attendance to explain about the Future Jobs Fund.

- Government funded scheme to provide employment opportunities.
- It would provide a minimum of 25 hours work a week, with at least the minimum wage as long as the person had been out of work for 26 weeks.
- 727 jobs would be created by the end of May 2010.
- The jobs would be across the public / private and voluntary sectors in the city and county.
- Jobs were being advertised from now onwards via Job Centreplus.
- Voluntary organisations were welcomed to contact Trevor if they had additional job opportunities.
- The support package would cover wages, national insurance and money for training.

Trevor was asked to provide an update on progress in six months.

Further details about the Future Jobs Fund can be obtained from:

<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/ep/regeneration/economic-development/jobsfund/>

futurejobs@leicester.gov.uk

0116 2528637

Future Jobs Team
 Regeneration
 A10 New walk Centre
 Welford Place
 Welford Road
 Leicester

LE1 6ZG

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 24 March.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Student Noise / Anti-Social Behaviour

Edmund Hockley informed the meeting that he was working closely with the Police to deal with noise and anti social behaviour problems. He noted that the University was keen to have good relations with local residents and he felt that most students were the same. Edmund provided leaflets and cards with contact details and details of the services he could help with.