



Leicester
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED:
SPINNEY HILL WARD**

CABINET

15 DECEMBER 2003

**ADDENDUM REPORT
SPINNEY HILL PARK – PROPOSED SITE FOR POLICE STATION
RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Report of the Corporate Director of Resources, Access and Diversity

1. Report

1.1 The consultation exercise involved the delivery of leaflets to 16,000 homes in the neighbourhood, the availability of leaflets from the Customer Services Centre and the Council's web site, letters sent to 47 community organisations in the area and consultation with the Ward Members for Spinney Hills, Coleman, Charnwood and Stoneygate Ward.

1.2 The options that respondents were asked to choose between on the leaflet were:

I think that Spinney Hill Park should remain untouched and if a new police station is needed it should be built elsewhere

NO POLICE STATION IN THE PARK

and

I think that the benefit to the community of having a new police station outweigh the loss of a small part of the park.

BUILD THE POLICE STATION

1.3 In total, 744 leaflets were returned with 641 (86%) in favour of the police station being located in the park and 103 (14%) against.

1.4 The return coupon gave respondents space to give any additional comments on the issue and it is clear from such comments that people had a wide knowledge of the issues at stake, and for those voting in favour of the police station fear of crime on the park was a key theme. The visibility of the police presence offered at the proposed location was highlighted as a major benefit as was the greater accessibility to the police. The park is felt to be an underused resource due to fear of crime and respondents believe a safer environment would be created thereby increasing use. Those voting against believe that parks should be protected and an alternative site off the park should be found.

- 1.5 Ward Members Councillors Draycott and Karim both responded in support of the police station.
- 1.6 The Highfields Community Association, Spinney Hill Park Bowling Club, the Pakistan Youth and Community Association and St. Peters Tenants Association support the police station with Hitslink and Highfields Sure Start not wanting it in the park.
- 1.7 The statutory advertising of the proposal to dispose of public open space was undertaken at the same time as the leafleting with adverts appearing in the Leicester Mercury on 12th and 19th November inviting objections.
- 1.8 47 letters of objection have been received, including from the Victorian Society, the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, the Friends of Leicester and Leicestershire Museums, The Garden History Society, Friends of the Earth and Vaughan Archaeological and Historical Society. 31 of the letters received are from addresses outside of the local policing unit boundary. 5 letters of support were also received.
- 1.9 The Victorian Society confirmed their vehement objections as they believe the proposal contradicts the Council's own policies in the Local Plan, the Cultural Strategy, Conservation Area policies and Leicester's status as an Environment City. They are concerned that a decision in favour will set a precedent for loss of more parkland in future and the history and design of Spinney Hill Park is such that it should not be interfered with. Their comments summarise the issues raised by other respondents and are supported in a letter received from Mel Read MEP.
- 1.10 On 25 September 2003, prior to the commencement of the public consultation exercise, a petition with 454 signatures was presented to Full Council worded as follows:
- "We, the undersigned, call on the City Council to honour its promise and reinstate Spinney Hill Park to its former glory. The Council should do everything within its powers to secure lottery funding as it has indicated on a number of occasions. We also welcome the amended plans by the police for the new police station on the site and believe both compliments each other. Both facilities will bring huge benefits to local people. We ask our local Councillors Mary Draycott and Piara Clair to assist us".
- 1.11 The police have organised a petition during the consultation and have given the Council a copy. 553 people have signed as follows:-
- "We, the undersigned fully support and approve this application by the Leicestershire Constabulary to site a new police station on the designated area within Spinney Hill Park so that the local police unit can continue to serve the local community effectively".
- 1.12 A petition has also been received from the Leicester Green Party with 10 names saying "we the undersigned object to Leicester City Council's proposal to build a police station on part of Spinney Hill Park. This is a public amenity, which should be preserved for public use. This is a crowded area of Leicester that does not have enough green spaces. The Council should look at alternative brown field sites and protect the park for future generations".

2. Officer to contact:

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