

# Castle Community Meeting

**Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:00 pm, Tuesday, 25 June 2013**

**Held at: St Andrews Community Centre, Gateway Street, Leicester**

Who was there:

Councillor Neil Clayton
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Councillor Patrick Kitterick
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Councillor Lynn Senior
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## **FORMAL SESSION**

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Clayton was elected as Chair for the meeting.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies received.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Senior declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 7, 'Policing Update', as she was a member of the Leicester City, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel.

Councillor Kitterick declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 6, 'Houses in Multiple Occupancy Update' as he lived in a house of multiple occupation and share with three other people to whom he was not related.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the interests were not considered so significant that it was likely to prejudice the Councillors' judgement of public interest. There were not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting during the discussion of the items.

Councillor Senior declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 5, 'St Andrew's Traffic Issues Update' as her partner was an employee in the Highways and Transportation Service at Leicester City Council. In view of this interest, Councillor Senior chose to leave the room when the agenda item was discussed.

### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The meeting received the minutes of the Castle Community Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

Councillor Senior asked for an amendment to Minute Item 92. Traffic Management Update, for the first sentence to read as follows:  
'Councillor Senior left the meeting for the agenda item, *having left during the previous item when transport issues were mentioned*'.

AGREED:

- 1) That the minutes of the Castle Community Meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the aforementioned amendment.

### **5. ST ANDREW'S TRAFFIC ISSUES UPDATE**

Councillor Senior left the meeting for the agenda item.

Councillor Kitterick informed the meeting that representatives from Leicester Royal Infirmary Interserve and University Hospitals Leicester had been invited to attend the Community Meeting, to try and answer residents questions and issues regarding car parking and Leicester Royal Infirmary staff.

Ruth Ward, Travelwise Manager for University Hospitals Leicester (UHL), was present and informed the meeting that part of her role was to encourage people not to use their cars to and from work. She said she covered all three hospital sites, at which there were issues with parking. Ruth said she managed the 'Hopper' bus between the three hospitals, and 12,000 people used the service weekly.

Jeff Garland, Leicester Royal Infirmary (LRI) informed those present the hospital had, from March 2013, a new facilities service provider, Interserve, who also dealt with car parking. He said meetings had been held with Leicester City Council regarding traffic issues and parking. Jeff said there were plans being developed around the LRI, which included a possible multi-storey car park, which would reduce congestion on Havelock Street, and provide better ingress and egress. He said the hospital was also looking at the timings of clinics to avoid peaks. He added most hospital staff parked in off-site car parks.

Jeff said the litter on Grisedale Close had been addressed, and a meeting was held with City Wardens to tackle the issue. He added staff visitors would be encouraged to use Nelson Mandela Park, and Interserve were working with City Wardens to identify repeat offenders, for example, at Gate 8. The installation of bins in the area had also been discussed.

Ruth said there was a new Chief Executive at University Hospitals Leicester who would not tolerate the issues that were presented at the meeting by residents and the Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) members, and that the LRI would work with Interserve and Leicester City Council to resolve issues. In the short term, alternative locations would be suggested to staff, and the hospital would work with City Wardens to see who was breaking the law and help identify culprits.

The Chair asked that direct communication be made by Interserve and UHL Managers with the St Andrews TARA, to liaise to identify issues in the area.

Jayesh Parmer, and Ed Kocik, Traffic Management, Leicester City Council, were also present at the meeting, and produced a map of the area, which was referred to during discussion.

Jayesh informed the meeting that Interserve Estates Management were responsible for the operation of LRI's car park on Havelock Street, which had queuing problems. He said a third workshop had been held between Leicester City Council and Interserve on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013. Jayesh said there were also issues with the football and rugby grounds which were being addressed as part of the whole project and Leicester City Council would meet with the sports grounds to help establish a match-day strategy.

Ed said the implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in the area would need to balance Blue Badge holders' need to park. He said in addition to existing

parking restrictions it was proposed to introduce no parking at any time to other areas. He added a legal process, followed by a planning process would take place, and he believed there would be objections to the proposal. He said the whole procedure would take approximately six months, but would hopefully solve problems for residents and the emergency services. He acknowledged there would have to be provision made for delivery vehicles in the area.

Residents said issues included Blue Badge holders parking on double yellow lines, and other drivers using visitors parking bays, and that more should be done to enforce the existing restrictions. Ed said Blue Badge holders could park on double yellow lines for up to three hours, and the police dealt with obstructions when necessary. He added the area would be looked at again to incorporate the additional issues raised. Councillor Kitterick suggested the residents meet with the police and officers to go through the issues in the area.

Jayesh said that with regards to the queuing problems, officers were undertaking a survey of the site. He informed the meeting of the proposal to make Jarrom Street one-way, and install road humps to stop speeding traffic. He added proper consultation would take place regarding the proposal, as it was important the changes did not create other 'rat runs' in the area. Residents said it was a huge mistake to close Mill Lane, which had since created the problems on Jarrom Street. The additional traffic had resulted in the re-routing of buses away from Havelock Street due to the queuing traffic waiting to gain access to the car park, and made it difficult for residents who lived in the area to get to work. Canon Naylor, St Andrews Church, said he had hoped speed restrictions would have had an effect on Jarrom Street, but they had not. He added the area required more traffic calming measures, but did not know if the ambulance service would agree.

Jayesh concluded that officers were working with the Rugby and Football Grounds to create a match day strategy. Leicester City Council and Ruth Ward were working together to develop a short-term plan to address issues, and would continue to work with Leicester Royal Infirmary, Interserve and the sports grounds to develop a long-term plan.

The Chair thanked officers for the update.

Councillor Senior returned to the meeting.

AGREED:

- 1) That the points raised above be noted.

## **6. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY UPDATE**

Anne Provan, Planning, Leicester City Council referred to the Council's Student Housing Supplementary Planning document, and the reference to the long-term use of lettings boards (To Let) on rented properties.

It was recognised that a lot of students lived in shared housing. Anne said the Council was considering the implementation of an Article 4 Direction which would give a level of control to the Council on the number of shared houses in the city, and

would apply to all shared housing, not just students. The effect of an Article 4 Direction would be to remove permitted development rights to convert accommodation into shared housing, and would apply to all properties occupied by 3-6 people not related (of the same family). Shared accommodation of seven or more people already required planning permission. The implementation of an Article 4 Direction would only apply to new development and not existing shared accommodation, or where two people were sharing.

Anne said the Council had looked at the areas with the highest concentration of students. Anne said 27% of the properties in Castle Ward were occupied by students. She added that the figure around the Walnut Street area (the 'Nut' and 'Lake' streets) rose to 34%, but did not include the purpose built properties.

Anne said a report would go to the Planning Committee, and if agreed the Council would go out to consultation over the next few weeks. She said if people agreed to continue with the Article 4 Direction, it would be confirmed in place, though a legal process would need to be followed. She added that notice of its implementation would be placed in the Council's, public notices in the Leicester Mercury, and on lampposts in the specific areas targeted in the city, where the problem was already perceived, and would come into force about a year later.

Anne then discussed the over-concentration of 'To Let' boards in Castle Ward, which were very often in situ all year round. She said the Council was looking to introduce a Regulation 7 Direction which would bring the 'To Let' boards under planning control within areas with a high concentration of Homes of Multiple Occupancy and a high concentration of students.

Anne said estate agents would have to apply for planning permission every time they wanted to put a board up, and the length of time they were in place would be restricted, and could only be up if there were vacancies. Estate agents would be required to remove the boards 14 days after being let. She said if there were still problems, it would be an opportunity for Leicester City Council to prosecute as it would be a breach of planning permissions. She added that it would be a huge amount of work for the Council and would have to be evidence based.

Anne said firstly the Council was looking to introduce a voluntary code for estate agents, with the message that it was not alright to put up boards all year. She added that if it did not work, it would provide the evidence to say that stronger planning control was needed. She added the Council had prepared a draft Voluntary Code of Practice on Letting Boards, and was being consulted on through the Council's website. Anne said the idea was it would be a self-policing method, and there had been some calls from estate agents to bring in the code.

Councillor Kitterick said difficulties would begin to show when it came to enforcement. He said it was clear lettings companies used the boards as a form of advertisement, and it would be difficult for the Planning Team to track and build up evidence for prosecution, which incurred many hours of officer time, and the money spent was not gained back through prosecution. He added that highly populated student areas created a fractured community, with some areas empty for a third of

the year. He said the Article 4 Direction would stop the creation of more houses with a high turnover of population.

Residents believed the figures given were conservative. Anne said the data was gathered for areas and not individual streets from Council Tax data, but students were exempt from paying Council Tax. Anne said that also written into the code would be a period of the year when no boards at all could be used, in recognition that they diminished the value of nearby properties.

The Chair thanked Anne for the information.

## **7. POLICING UPDATE**

Sergeant James Smallman and PC Alan Furniss of Leicestershire Constabulary gave the following update:

- Crime was down by 5% which was mainly due to the better targeting of resources towards crime prevention.
- Cycle thefts were up, and advised residents to use 'D' locks which were available from the Leicester Royal Infirmary police office, and Bishop Street library.
- During the warmer weather, home-owners should ensure that doors and windows are locked when going out / to bed, as a secure house limited the opportunities for burglars.
- There was a replacement lock scheme to assist people who were victims of burglary. There was usually a survey by a crime prevention officer, including adjoining properties, with a leaflet drop asking people to report any suspicious behaviour.
- Keeping valuables out of sight in vehicles would also reduce the opportunities for theft.
- Residents were encouraged to report any suspicious behaviour to the police.
- There had been issues of anti-social behaviour on the Clocktower at Eastgates. Through intervention work and Youth Officers, there were more patrols and enforcement leading to arrests, and incidents of anti-social behaviour were reducing.
- More work had been undertaken around street drinking and begging, targeting people to ensure they were getting the help they needed.
- The police were sharing knowledge with City Wardens and other agencies to help to identify the culprits responsible for graffiti.
- The police actively worked with youth engagement.
- If there were other specific issues in the city, for example, knife / gun or street crime, they would become part of a problem solving plan. There were no specific issues in Castle Ward, and knife crime was zero in the past six months. The police also received calls from schools / colleges to discuss the dangers of knife crime.
- Smart water and UV pens could still be issued for marking property.

The Chair thanked the police for the update.

## **8. CITY WARDENS UPDATE**

Nik Krneta and Chris Bramley Brown, City Wardens with Leicester City Council gave the following update:

- 194 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) had been issued over the last three months, and included:
  - 13 bins on streets
  - 6 distribution of free printed matter (leafleting)
  - 3 failures to display No Smoking signs in premises / vehicles
  - 3 waste transfer failures
  - 36 smoking in taxis.
- If FPNs weren't paid, the case would go to court.
- Much officer time had been spent on one case for littering, but the Council were successful in court, and awarded £7-8,000.
- City Wardens had taken on duties for checking skips / scaffolding on the public highway, which required a licence. Retrospective licences could be issued but cost more.
- People have to be witnessed dropping litter and walking away to be given a fine.
- Letting agents have to be contacted to remove boards found on pavements.
- City Wardens were working with the two Universities, students and landlords to prevent issues when students vacated their properties, to ensure rubbish was removed from properties correctly.

Residents asked if BBQs were allowed on Bede Park, to which City Wardens believed they were. Councillor Kitterick said a dedicated BBQ area was being looked into.

A resident asked the City Wardens to look into an area on Garendon Street which was turning into a grot spot, to which they agreed. Residents also asked for bins to be installed on Jarrom Street, and were informed they could apply for ward community funding.

The Chair thanked the City Wardens for the update.

## **9. THE CASTLE WARD BUDGET**

The meeting was informed that there was a balance of £19,694 community meeting fund for Castle.

The following budget applications were made and determined as follows:

### **Application 1 – Eric Waweru – The Centre Project**

The application was for £1,230.00 (total bid £1,730 of which £500 was fast-tracked from the 2012/13 budget), for funding to replace broken lounge furniture and repair/replace worn out floor and carpets in the kitchen and lounge area.

**RECOMMENDED:**

that the application be supported and £1,230 be allocated.

### **Application 2 – Vicky Hudson, Park Services. – Nelson Mandela Park**

The application was for £1,890.00, for funding for the purchase of a new corporate style anti-vandal proof notice board near to the new play facilities for Parks and the wider community, and had been requested by park users and local residents.

RECOMMENDED:

that the application be supported and £1,890 be allocated.

### **Application 3 – Children and Parents Alliance (CAPtA – Val Fisher) – Computer Skills Workshop**

The application was for £662.00 (joint bid with Spinney Hills and Stoneygate Wards £1,996 in total), for funding towards a series of 10 starter computer workshops so that local people, in particular women can develop computer literacy skills.

RECOMMENDED:

that the application be supported and £662 be allocated.

### **Budget Applications Not Supported**

The meeting noted that the following grant applications had not been supported.

- i) Request for £1,600 – Youth Education Project – Sports Activity and Engagement Programme  
The application was deferred pending further information from the applicant.
- ii) Request for £250 (joint application with Spinney Hills Ward totalling £500) – S Pringle-Bridges – Leicester’s Got Raw Talent. Members noted this was a retrospective application, and were therefore unable to support it.

### **Late Application**

- (i) Request for £6,000 – Seventh Day Adventist Church – Sewer/drain refurbishment and toilet improvements, including the provision of disabled access facility to all existing ground floor toilets.

RECOMMENDED:

that the application not be supported.

Members were not supportive of the application which they believed was a large amount to be funded from the Community Meeting budget, and the application was not clear if the Castle community would benefit from the funded refurbishment.

### **Budget applications approved under the Fast Tracked Process**



The following budget request was included on the agenda for formally noting as it had been agreed by Councillors in-between meetings to enable the project to take place.

Robert Hall – Leicester U3A Open Day - £50.00

RESOLVED:

that the previously agreed funding be noted.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor Senior left the meeting at this point.

- Councillor Kitterick informed the meeting that, as Chair of the Planning Committee, he could not discuss the planning application on the former car park site at Filbert Street, though it had been refused permission to operate as a car park. The City Wardens said some of the hoardings had been knocked down, and he would look into getting the overgrown area cleared up.
- An update would be brought to the next meeting on the implementation of 20mph zones.
- A survey on the traffic flow on Havelock Street would be undertaken.

**11. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.12pm.

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