



Humberstone & Hamilton and Thurncourt Area Committee

RECORD OF MEETING

**Held on Monday, 10 April 2006 at 7.00pm at
Hamilton Community College, Keyham Lane West, Leicester.**

Present

Councillors

Councillor Roman Scuplak - (Chair)

Councillor John Allen, Thurncourt;

Councillor Brenda Maw, Thurncourt;

Councillor John Mugglestone, Humberstone and Hamilton;

Councillor Roman Scuplak, Humberstone and Hamilton;

Councillor Stephen Thompson, Humberstone and Hamilton;

Partners

Sergeant Matlock – Hamilton Local Policing Unit

29 members of the public were present at the meeting:

* * * * *

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked whether they had any declarations of interest in any of the items to be considered on the Programme for the Meeting. The following declarations were made: -

Councillors Mrs. Maw and Allen disclosed personal and non-prejudicial interests in respect of Minute 75 - Children's Centres (Thurncourt Community Centre).

Councillor Thompson disclosed a personal and non-prejudicial interest in respect of Minute 75 - Children's Centres (Northfields House).

71. RECORD OF LAST MEETING

The record of the previous meeting, dated 30 January 2006, having been previously circulated, were agreed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment: -

Minute 60 – Joint Action Group

third line delete “move away from” and insert “**be more focused regarding**”
community consultation,

72. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM THE LAST MEETING

The Chair drew the meetings attention to the report that gave responses to questions asked at the previous meeting of the Area Committee.

The responses to the questions were noted.

73. DOORSTEP CRIME

Joan Mitchell, Consumer Protection Service, attended the meeting to give a brief presentation on Doorstep Crime, covering principally distraction burglaries and bogus trade offences.

Joan stated that Trading Standards locally comprised the Leicester City Consumer Protection Service and Leicestershire Trading Standards with the role of making sure residents were safe and were not ‘ripped off’. Within Leicester there were 14 frontline officers but that the service was not operational 24/7.

Joan gave information on how criminals operated and how they could be identified. It was stated that everyone was a potential victim, the old and vulnerable being particularly at risk. It was further stated that the successful criminals/bogus traders made large sums of money from their often unsuspecting victims.

Relevant legislation relating to doorstep trading was quoted, along with the appropriate offences. The area Committee were informed that bogus traders employed a number of methods to help maintain a level of credibility, including: -

- Quote freephone and mobile numbers only
- Use familiar sounding names and addresses, or clone details
- Charming but threatening
- Jack of all trades/ cold call or send flyer
- Advertise in Yellow Pages
- Professionally sign written vans
- Suits, ties and boiler suits
- Professional flyers and even use web sites.

Joan stated that Consumer Protection at the City Council, in an effort to raise awareness and reduce incidents of doorstep crime, were able to take certain actions, including: -

- Issue community alerts/warnings
- Rapid response in conjunction with Police to disrupt.
- Target hardening to reduce repeat victimisation
- Refer victims to Victim Support, Social Services, Neighbourhood Watch, Age Concern, Care and Repair and Meals on Wheels, other care and advice agencies and chiropodists.
- Share intelligence with other Trading Standards and Police

In concluding the Area Committee were given a number of suggestions to help prevent becoming a victim of doorstep crime, these were as follows: -

- Never employ cold callers
- Don't keep money at home
- Don't use a nameplate outside your door
- Use your doorchain
- Check callers identification independently
- Verify who the caller is
- Ask the caller to make an appointment when a friend/relative can be present
- You are in control
- If in doubt keep them out.

Joan was thanked for her presentation and the Area Committee were informed that she could be contacted at the Leicester City Consumer Protection Service (0116) 252 6551.

74. SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Mr. Michael Cooke, Chief Executive, Leicester Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership, attended the meeting. The Area Committee were informed that The Leicester Partnership, made up of representatives from the City Council, the Police, the Primary Care Trusts and other key service providers, was tasked with the delivery of the Leicester Local Area Agreement, an agreement that would form the basis of the future delivery of services within Leicester, and which would have far reaching affects on all communities within the City. Four key partnership themes to the Local Area Agreement had been identified and a Chief Executive and a team of staff who worked in liaison with, and reported to, The Leicester Partnership headed up each themed partnership area. The four themed partnerships were reported as follows: -

Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership
 Health and Older People Partnership
 Children and Young People Partnership
 Economic Regeneration and Enterprise Partnership.

Within Safer and Stronger Communities a series of aims and objectives had been identified and were reported as follows: -

- Reduce overall crime
- Reduce crime and harm caused by drugs and alcohol
- Assist people to feel safe within their communities
- Empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decisions and services
- Improve the quality of local environment
- Widen access to culture and sport
- Reduce pollution and waste and support biodiversity
- Better transport
- Improve housing conditions within the most deprived areas
- Tackle the causes of homelessness
- Develop community cohesion, social interaction and inclusion
- Build respect in communities

It was reported that to assist in the delivery of the stated aims and objectives the voluntary and community sector would be encouraged to engage with the Leicester Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership.

In concluding it was stated that the biggest challenge would be to get agencies/projects to work together. People's expectations as to the levels of service provision they required was continually rising and that by entering into joint working the maximum use could be made of the funding available. This had not often been the case, with a number of agencies/projects operating in parallel with others leading to a waste of precious funding and the consequent duplication of service provision.

Mr Cooke was thanked for his presentation.

75. CHILDRENS CENTRES

Jane Hammond, Children's Centre Leader, West Humberstone, attended the meeting and outlined the provision of Children's Centres, a Government initiative born out of the success of the Sure Start programme. The overall aim of Children's Centres was to provide the most convenient access to a range of services for families. Research that had been carried out had shown that by joining up education, daycare, family support and health services actually improved outcomes for children.

It was stated that Children's Centres would serve children from 0 – 5 years, and their families and would be community driven as well as output driven, whilst offering services for everyone. Families would be able to access the following services: -

- Full Daycare and Early education
- Midwifery
- Health Visiting
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Family Support
- Play Services
- Family and Adult Learning

In addition the following services would also be offered: -

Social Work Support and Advice
Childcare Information
Job Centre Plus
Educational Psychology
Special Needs Advice
Teenage Pregnancy Support
Behaviour Management

Children's Centres would ensure that local parents were involved at all levels and that staff from different backgrounds worked together. The services offered would be planned according to local needs and wishes, whilst ensuring an equality of access.

Within Leicester five existing Sure Start Programmes had become Children's Centres. The five programmes were: -

Beaumont Leys
St. Matthews
Braunstone
New Parks
Saffron.

In addition five new Children's Centres had been developed at:-

Eyres Monsell and Gilmorton
Belgrave and Rushey Mead
Northfields and West Humberstone
Thurnby Lodge
West End

Feasibility work was about to start on the development of seven further Children's Centres in Leicester to be up and running 2006/08 at: -

Netherhall
Rowlatts Hill
Braunstone Frith
Mowmacre
North Evington
Rowley Fields
Belgrave (Loughborough Road)

In addition, during this period, the existing Highfields Sure Start programme would also become a Children's Centre.

Jane Hammond was thanked for her presentation.

76. LOCAL POLICING - UPDATE

Sergeant Matlock reported that neighbourhood Policing had been in place in the area since February. Hamilton Local Policing Unit were currently the second best unit in the County for the solving of crimes.

77. YOUTH PROVISION - UPDATE

It was noted that no representative from the Youth Service was present at the meeting and the Town Clerk was instructed to ensure that an update on Youth was provided at the next meeting.

78. INFORMATION SHARING

Future of former Laburnum Road Allotments Site

Neil Evans, Team Leader, Investment and Development, Leicester City Council, attended the meeting to seek the views of the Area Committee on the future uses of the former Laburnum Road Allotments site, an area of approximately 6 acres, which has recently been released following a citywide Strategic Allotment review and which will soon be marketed. The City of Leicester Local Plan identified the site as having potential for development.

Concerns were expressed that, should the site be developed for housing purposes that this use would create traffic, noise and pollution problems to properties in residential streets in the vicinity of the Allotment Site. It was suggested that the City Council should declare their intention as to the future use of the land as the local developing Hamilton area had urgent need of Community and Recreation facilities.

Neil responded by stating that the City Council were obliged to maximise their assets and that, in the case of this land, the future use would be balanced against the needs of the community and the planning constraints.

The Area Committee were informed that the likely timescale for developing this site would be months away. Assurances were sought from the officers that full public consultation would be carried out at the time development proposals were being finalised, this was agreed.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

79. AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET

1) Area Committee Budget 2005/06

The Chair reported that Councillors had met, and were due to meet again on 25 April 2006, to finalise the allocation of monies from the 2005/06 Area

Committee Budget. Should there be an overspend then certain applications would be carried forward for funding from the 2006/07 Budget allocation. A further report would be given at the next meeting.

2) Area Committee Budget 2006/07

i) Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre

Request for £200 to part fund a coach trip to Torquay by senior citizen's from Netherhall on Monday 10 April 2006.

It was noted that the Councillors had supported the application as the trip was taking place on the day of the Area Committee and the funding requested had been made available.

ii) The International Baton Twirling Championships, Rome – 29th July to 7th August 2006

The Area Committee were informed that an application for funding had been received on behalf of three local youths who had been selected for the England Team to appear at the International Baton Twirling Championships in Rome. The cost per entrant to represent England at the championships was £750.

iii) Life Education Centres (LEC's)

Pc. Rob Showell, Leicestershire Constabulary, attended the meeting and spoke to an application for funding on behalf of Life Education Centres, a national drug prevention charity. The request was to enable children of up to 15 years of age to have access at school to the drugs and healthy living advice provided by LEC. Funding to subsidise the visits by LEC to local schools had been previously available but had now ceased. Schools were struggling to meet the costs of the subsidy and the application was to try and help re-instate the subsidy. Similar applications were being made to each of the four Area Committees in Leicester.

Concerns were expressed as to whether the Area Committee Budget was the appropriate funding source and that it was agreed that further information would be sought.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the application referred to at (i) above, relating to the senior citizen's coach trip, be approved. **Total - £200**
- ii) that the application referred to at (ii) above be supported by contributing £150 per entrant. **Total - £450**
- iii) that the Area Committee noted the request at (iii) above and were sympathetic to the request. The Area Committee were of the opinion that further information on the background to the application was

required prior to a decision being made by Councillors on 25 April 2006, failing which the application would be re-considered at the next meeting of the Area Committee.

80. PETITIONS

The Town Clerk reported the responses received from the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture in respect of the two petitions received at the 30 January meeting of the Area Committee. The two petitions, with a total of 22 signatures, from residents of Wintersdale Road and Perkyn Road related to the same footpath and were worded as follows: -

“We, the undersigned, being residents of Wintersdale Road and Perkyn Road, urgently need measures to correct the vandalism, rubbish dumping and associated anti-social behaviour in the footpath known as Wintersdale Walk.

In the past five years, fires have burned the privately owned fences to the extent that owners are reluctant to continue their repairs, this in turn allows for unauthorised access over the rear gardens, recently this has resulted in two burglaries at Christmas where they used Wintersdale Walk as a means of access to the rear gardens and consequently this caused a great deal of upset.

We believe either drastic action in the form of secure fencing or a closure order for the walk is now the only course of action that will allow us to enjoy the safety and privacy of our houses.”

The Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture responded as follows: -

“1. Highway

I have checked our records and can confirm that Wintersdale Walk is adopted as a highway maintainable at public expense. The usual means of securing permanent highway closures is to use powers under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990 or the Highways Act (HA) 1980. Using these powers highways can be closed, in order to allow permitted development (TCPA Section 247) or if in the Council's opinion that it is no longer needed for public use (HA Section 118).

Neither of the above powers could be exercised on this occasion as there is no planning application relating to this site and the path would appear to offer a realistic route for pedestrians moving through the area.

Even if a legal closure could be obtained problems could still be encountered with the future management and maintenance of the land upon which the footpath is situated, as the Council would be released from its legal duty to maintain the path. The future maintenance of this would then become the responsibility of the landowner(s). This could lead to potential problems with the future maintenance of this area, which if left unused and ill maintained, could become a site for further antisocial activities.

2. Trees

An inspection has revealed that 3 of the 4 lamp columns are obscured or partially obscured by the trees. Arrangements are in hand for pruning of the trees and in two cases permission of a householder is being sought.

In addition, one of the lights was not working and the contractor has been instructed to carry out a repair. Arrangements have also been made to convert one lamp from low-pressure sodium unit to the more modern optically efficient high-pressure sodium lighting.”

RESOLVED:

that the response received be noted and it was agreed that there was no further action that could be taken to address the petitioners concerns.

81. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following questions were submitted on question forms during the meeting. Discussions that took place about these questions are outlined below. It was explained that any questions that could not be answered in full at the meeting would be submitted to the relevant departments for response at the next meeting of the Committee.

35) *When can we expect Customer Service Centres in our Wards. What makes the Braunstone, Saffron and New Parks areas so special that they have Customer Service Centres?*

36) *I would like to know when the footpath is going to become safe, the steps removed, and a slope installed at Bessingham Close, behind Tesco's at Hamilton?*

Response given at the meeting

Councillor Scuplak stated that the steps/slope referred to was actually on Tesco's land. The City Council had put pressure on Tesco's to do something but had been unsuccessful. The City Council had regularly cleared rubbish from the area in the past and would continue to do so for the time being. Bessingham Close was a street that had not yet been adopted by the City Council and was under the ownership of the Housing Association, and was therefore still private land.

The police were aware of the issues regarding youths and were keeping the situation under observation.

37) *What date will Humberstone and Netherhall libraries be closing?*

Can we have the Zodiac Boys Club open more nights a week. The Club only opens on Monday night at the present time?

38) *In the light of provision of sports facilities, the state of the tennis courts in Monks Rest leaves something to ponder. There are no nets or net supports for the three remaining courts. Perhaps we have a reason for this and rectification possibly, because according to the Information Board, tennis is provided for on said park?*

39) *Following the excellent presentation on the Safer and Stronger Communities aspect of the Local Area Agreement at the Area Committee can we be told what steps will be taken within our area to progress: -*

i) *empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decisions and services?*

ii) *develop community cohesion, social interaction and inclusion?*

Are there any plans to involve people, other than Councillors in our Area Committee?

Will the Area Committee be preparing an Area Community Plan?

82. SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The following topic was suggested for the next meeting: -

Economic Regeneration and Enterprise theme of the Local Area, Agreement, to follow on from the Safer and Stronger Communities presentation given earlier this meeting.

83. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Town Clerk submitted a suggested timetable of meetings for the remainder of the year 2006/07, as follows: -

<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
5 June	22 January
31 July	19 March
11 September	
13 November	

RESOLVED:

that the dates reported be agreed, subject to any revision that may prove necessary at a later date. It was also noted that the next meeting of the Area Committee would be held at Thurnby Lodge Community Centre, Thurncourt Road.

84. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Urgent Business.

85. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.07pm.

