

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Wednesday, 1 July 2009

Held at: Fosse Primary School, Balfour Street

Who was there:

Councillor Manish Sood

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.

Ward Councillors

Residents could raise issues with Councillor Manish Sood.

Highways

Information and advice on a range of highways issues.

Britain in Bloom

Information about Leicester’s plans for Britain in Bloom this summer.

NHS Leicester City

Advice about local health services.

Libraries

Information about the local library service and activities.

Police

An opportunity to raise issues with local police.

Life Coaching

Information about the benefits of life coaching.

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.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Manish Sood took the Chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Wann

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests in the business on the agenda and/or declare that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them. No declarations were made.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS ISSUES

Mike Richardson, Head of Planning Management & Delivery explained issues relating to planning applications, particularly regarding applications for turning premises into flats. He noted that this issue was particularly pertinent to the Fosse Ward.

Mike said that there were regulations and legislation that had to be followed in dealing with planning applications. He explained that when an application was received, it had to be publicised correctly. Most applications were decided by Council officers, but some were sent to the Planning and Development Control Committee to decide. Councillors also received a list of applications and they could ask that an application be sent to the Committee. Ward Councillors could speak at the meeting on behalf of anyone who requested. If an application was refused, the applicant had the right to appeal.

Mike said that he was aware that parking was a concern of local residents when applications for flats were made. He said that there was Government guidance on requiring parking for such developments, and it was often difficult to argue refusal on these grounds at appeal. The Planning Inspectorate had overturned some refusals in Leicester on parking grounds. The Fiveways House development in the ward would be a test of this, when it went to appeal. He said that residents had opportunity to make their case.

Residents expressed their concern regarding the parking guidelines, saying that existing developments already caused significant problems. Mike said that the Government was encouraging such developments to protect the countryside. Leicester needed 20,000 new homes in the next twenty years. Government policy aimed at creating "sustainable urban areas" where people could walk, cycle or use public transport.

The Chair thanked Mike for the discussion.

6. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

Jeff Miller, Service Director, Regeneration, Highways and Transportation, gave a presentation on highways issues in the City and the Fosse Ward. He also gave out a newsletter.

He identified main issues from previous community meetings. These included parking provision and obstruction, speeding and road safety, and condition of roads and footways. He explained how the work of the team fitted into main Council strategies and gave an indication of the extent of the work they were responsible for, including roads, footways, lights, traffic lights, highway trees and car parks.

Jeff explained how the team could help with the issues identified. Parking could be dealt with by possible parking schemes, verge hardening, laybys, enforcement and highway design. Ways of tackling speeding and safety included speed surveys, vehicle activated signs, safety cameras, traffic calming, pedestrian crossings and lower speed limits. It was noted that Leicester was the first city to roll out 20mph speed limits on residential roads.

Jeff stated that roads and footways in the city had been assessed as in fair condition, but had deteriorated in some cases following the harsh winter, causing an increase in potholes. Highway inspections were being done, and the Council had introduced a rapid response team to deal with any dangers that were reported. There was also the Council's winter service which gritted the roads.

The following questions or points were raised by residents and answered by Jeff:

- 1) *Some roads were resurfaced last year at the wrong time, and now they are damaged and being trodden into our homes. Will they be redone?*
The road surfaces will be repaired. The details will be confirmed to the next meeting.
- 2) *Parking is a problem in the area. There may be interest in a parking scheme. Double yellow lines and bollards also add to the problem, as they push the cars elsewhere.*
It is known that this is a big issue. Many households now have more than one car. We can consult on a residents' parking scheme if people ask us to.
- 3) *If more flats are approved, will all of these new residents be able to apply for a permit if we have a parking scheme?*
If planning permission was granted on the basis that only a certain number of spaces are required, we would not make permits available to any more than this number.
- 4) *Is a set number of people from each street required to approve a parking scheme for it to go ahead? Also, a lot of households in the area are tenants and may not want the scheme. This would disadvantage permanent residents.*

A majority over the whole area would be required, not specific streets. In Clarendon Park, much of the student population didn't reply to the consultation, meaning that the decision was made mainly on the basis of permanent residents' opinion.

5) *Will 20 mile an hour limits be introduced in Fosse Ward soon?*

It is expected that they will be introduced in Fosse in the next 12 months.

6) *Who would have to pay the £25 charge for a parking permit?*

Any residents who wanted to park would have to pay. This covers the running costs only and does not make any profit.

7. POLICE

Representatives from the Hinckley Road Neighbourhood Policing Team were present to discuss local policing issues.

Sergeant Julie Strong gave an explanation of Operation Stay Safe. This took place on the Friday evenings of 19 and 26 June. Officers worked with other agencies to address antisocial behaviour. On one evening they met with over 50 young people and referred them to appropriate agencies and services. They had received positive feedback, showing that it had been worthwhile. It was hoped that such evenings would become more regular.

PC Anton Wilson gave an update regarding crime statistics in the area and gave details of surgeries that had been set up for residents to visit and discuss concerns. He detailed figures for the previous four weeks on a wide range of crimes. He also gave information on detection rates. He said that, in some cases figures were low and therefore statistical comparison was difficult. In response to a resident's query, he said that there was not a big drugs problem in the area.

PC Wilson discussed parking and road safety issues, stating that there was a campaign to stop illegal parking. Where double yellow lines were painted on corners, they would enforce this in order to increase safety. Residents were concerned that this could make the congestion worse, but it was felt that such a move could reduce the number of people coming to the area to park and then walking to town.

The meeting discussed the possibility of setting up a residents' association to tackle a variety of issues in the area. PC Wilson said that the police would support this. He also explained how the police were able to assist the Polish community, referring them to appropriate advice organisations. The transient population had made it difficult to set up a neighbourhood watch scheme in the Tudor Road area, so a "Police and Communities Together" scheme was being piloted, which involved schools, Councillors, Police and other organisations in order to build the community.

The Chair thanked the Police for their input and encouraged residents to attend the surgeries. A resident thanked the officers for the Friday night operations, stating that it had made a difference and that they had dealt with some difficult situations. The area had benefited from having such a good policing team.

8. BUDGET

Anita Patel, Member Support Officer, gave an update on budget issues and introduced applications for consideration.

Anita stated that on 25 March 2009, £500 had been allocated to set up a joint residents and police initiative. Work was ongoing on this, and, once a substantial plan was in place, the money would be released. Also on 25 March, £3000 had been allocated for environmental improvements. This was being used on a variety of things, such as clean-up events, additional litter bins and graffiti clearing. A breakdown of this would be brought to the next meeting.

Anita explained that a total of £17,000 had been allocated to the Community Meeting for 2009-10. This was £5,000 for the Ward Community Fund, £2,000 for the Community Cohesion Fund and £10,000 for the Ward Action Plan Fund.

The following bids were submitted for discussion. Any award of funding would be subject to the support of Councillor Wann and the final approval of the Cabinet Lead.

Leicester City Council Sports Services Summer Soccer Academy

The meeting felt that this was a good initiative, but expressed disappointment that no-one had attended the meeting to present the application. It was noted, however, that postponement to the next meeting would miss the summer holidays.

AGREED: That the Community Meeting supports the funding of £2,500 from the Ward Action Plan Fund.

Woodgate Residents Association, Refurbishing Kitchen

It was noted that the refurbishment was subject to the approval of additional funding from Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL). The centre was well used for a variety of activities such as older persons' lunches and a nursery.

AGREED: That the Community Meeting supports the funding of £1774.65 from the Ward Community Fund, subject to a request for additional funding from VAL being approved.

9. UPDATE ON WARD PRIORITIES

Anita Patel, Member Support Officer, gave an update on the Ward Action Plan that had been compiled at previous Community Meetings in the year 2008/09. She outlined progress as follows:

- 1) Antisocial behaviour and vandalism – some issues had been addressed and action was continuing.
- 2) Street Scene – work had taken place regarding clearing litter and Adrian Russell, Service Director, Environmental Services had picked up issues at meetings to address.
- 3) Security and CCTV, particularly on the Rally– Project officers had done presentations about their vision for the Rally. The Community meeting would be kept informed.

- 4) Lack of youth provision – young people from Woodgate had attended a Community Meeting. It had been suggested that neighbourhood centres should be used more.
- 5) Derelict and unsafe buildings – officers from Building Control had visited sites and were addressing issues.

Anita said that residents had commented that the items on previous agendas had seemed irrelevant to the area. New items could be added to the Ward Action Plan if felt necessary. Residents said that this meeting had been much more relevant and they had had the chance to talk about important issues. They thanked officers for action taken to previous requests, such as street cleaning.

Residents asked that the previously mentioned issue of road surfacing be addressed. Anita said that officers would look into this.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair invited Bally Gill, from the Montessori Grammar School, to speak to the meeting about the benefits of life coaching.

Bally said that life coaching could affect the individual and the community. It enabled people to succeed and improve their quality of life. It developed personal and professional areas of life, providing techniques as required. It could be carried out in groups or one to one, identifying aspirations and setting deadlines and goals. It also could identify how to improve a person's life by helping others.

11. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.