

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 14 December 2009

Held at: Highfields Community Centre, Melbourne Road

Who was there:

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Dr Chowdhury
Councillor Dawood

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	Police Issues
Members of the public were able to talk to their local Councillors.	Local Police Officers were present to talk to residents about general policing issues..
3x30 Pledge Campaign	Traffic and Highways
Officers were present to talk about the Council’s 3x30 Pledge Campaign, which aimed to increase the numbers of over 16s taking part in physical activity and sport and encouraged them to undertake 3x30 minute activities.	Officers were available to talk about traffic and highways issues in Spinney Hills.
City Wardens	Spinney Hills Park
The City Wardens team was present to discuss residents’ concerns	Officers responsible for Spinney Hills Park were present.
Trading Standards	
Representatives from Trading Standards were present	

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.

57. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND INTRODUCTIONS

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Dawood be elected as Chair for the meeting.

Councillor Dawood announced that two community partners had been appointed to the Community Meeting:

1. Furzana Khalifa – Highfields Area Forum
2. Sadiq Daud – Vulcan Road Islamic Education and Community Centre

As he was in attendance, Sadiq was introduced to the meeting and sat alongside the Ward Councillors during the meeting.

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Furzana Khalifa, Highfields Area Forum.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interest they had in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them.

No declarations of interests were made.

60. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous Spinney Hills Community Meeting, held on Monday 28 September 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

61. TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Andy Thomas from the Regeneration, Transport and Highways Division was present to discuss traffic and highways issues in the area.

In respect of the concerns around hospital commuter parking in the Gwendolen Road area, Andy informed the meeting that the concerns had been taken up with representatives at the General Hospital and that the Hospital were to provide an assessment of the traffic conditions in the area close to the hospital. It was reported that this assessment would be brought to a future meeting within the next few months. Councillor Dawood added that the creation of any additional parking spaces for staff at the hospital should help to alleviate the current concerns.

In respect of the Frederick Street Traffic Regulation Order, Andy explained that officers hoped to secure enough legal parking space for residents whilst at the same time ensuring that emergency services vehicles could safely access residential properties. He stated that it was difficult to manage the policy within inner-city areas where the streets were particularly narrow. He also explained that officers were currently considering the views of residents who had objected to the scheme as part of the statutory consultation process, and that these included the views of teachers who worked at local schools. Members were informed that school travel plans were devised to make transport arrangements as easy as possible for both teachers and pupils.

Concern was also expressed by members of the public around commuter parking in St Matthews. Andy shared these concerns and felt that the problem was particularly bad around the Malabar Road area. He stated that the situation was surveyed by officers three and a half months ago, and agreed to monitor it again, prior to the next meeting on 1 March which was to be held in St Matthews. It was confirmed that there was currently no residents parking scheme in St Matthews. Councillor Dawood agreed to discuss the matter in further detail at the next meeting, and encouraged those residents affected by the issue to attend.

Similar problems were also reported within the St Peters Estate. These problems were particularly with motorists parking on double-yellow lines. It was felt by several members of the public that consultation around a possible residents parking scheme for St Peters was necessary. Furthermore, a member of the public stated that commuter parking was also rife on the streets close to Spinney Hills Park, and believed that staff based at the police station often parked in residential areas. In respect of the latter point, Inspector Shane O'Neil stated that Spinney Hills LPU had 16 parking spaces, 10 of which were used by police vehicles, and that this left very few remaining for staff. He stated that he had never received a complaint before from a member of the public around this issue as he felt that the public recognised police officers and other staff as part of the community. He stated that he was happy to discuss the matter further, should it be perceived as particularly problematic. Councillor Dawood suggested that a meeting be convened between residents affected by this issue, local police officers and Ward Councillors.

62. TRADING STANDARDS

Joan Mitchell, Trading Standards was present to lead a discussion on Trading Standards issues.

Joan explained that her area of work covered rogue trading and door-step crime. In respect of the latter, she stated that hundreds of calls were received annually in relation to contractual disputes with rogue traders. She announced that two such traders had recently been prosecuted for their actions.

Those present were warned to protect themselves by not undertaking any business with those who were suspected as being rogue traders. It was reported that a list of bogus traders was available on the Council's website, as well as information on local no cold-calling zones.

Joan encouraged anyone who was affected by trading standards issues to visit the advice centre located on Bishop Street or to call 08454 040506.

In response to a question from a Member of the Public, Joan confirmed that she was aware that bogus charity collections had taken place within the Spinney Hills Ward.

Members were generally of the view that it was the most vulnerable members of society who were the most likely victims of such crime. Joan agreed that this was the case and explained that immediate intervention was an option if a crime was reported.

63. 3 x 30 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

Carla Lane, Sports Services, was present to provide an overview of the City Council's 3 x 30 Pledge Campaign, which aimed to increase the numbers of over 16s taking part in physical activity and sport and encouraged them to undertake 3 x 30 minute activities each week.

Carla explained that she was working across the City to promote this initiative. Funding had been obtained from the NHS and the City Council to allow the programme to run for three years. This allowed residents to be able to sign up to the scheme free of charge. Since its inception in July, over 1,000 had signed up.

The meeting was informed that physical inactivity within Leicester costs £60m annually, and that one in three residents smoked with only one or four eating a healthy, balanced diet.

In response from a Member of the Committee around what exactly the initiative aimed to deliver, Carla stated that it was hoped that this would give people the opportunity to look closely at their lifestyles, and would consequently be motivated to undertake more exercise.

A question was asked around how the initiative had engaged with BME communities. In response to this, Carla explained that the initiative was still at an early stage and she intended to meet more community groups to identify any particular needs. Carla did confirm that she had recently met with the Sports Development Officer based at the Highfields Centre to discuss the initiative.

The Members pledged full support towards the initiative and felt that it was important that it had a strong ward focus.

64. SPINNEY HILLS PARK: HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND BID

Bob Mullins, Standards and Development Manager, was present to provide an update on the Heritage Lottery Fund Bid for improvements to Spinney Hills Park.

Bob informed the meeting that on 15 October 2009, a sum of £2.5m was awarded to make improvements to Spinney Hill Park through the Heritage Lottery Fund. It was explained that the Park's Board were to meet in the near future to agree on a programme of works, as there was a growing need to sign the final contract. It was explained that the play area may have to temporarily close whilst the works were being undertaken.

Bob suggested that a further update on this matter be brought to a future meeting once the full programme of works had been confirmed.

In light of the extent of the proposed work for the park, Members felt that it was vital that any improvements were not damaged by the fair-ground which was held annually on the park. Bob explained that some initial discussion had taken place around this and that there would be some re-enforced grounding to help to deal better with any large events that took place.

In response to a question from a Member of the Committee, Bob confirmed that when the works commenced, officers would explore whether a local contractor could undertake part of the work. It was also confirmed that a condition could be placed in the tendering agreement, which encouraged the use of local labour.

The members of the public present at the meeting generally welcomed the developments at the park. There were concerns however around the consultation processes that had taken place in respect of planning the programme of works. Bob agreed to provide further information around the consultation processes at the next meeting. In respect of future consultation, it was explained that this would concern areas that were open for influence such as garden areas and tree planting.

65. BUDGET

Steve Letten, Members Support Officer, stated that the following applications had been received:

B1) Community Cultural Awareness – request for £1,250 from the Centre for Research and Development for the Somali Community

To pay for four sessions on cultural awareness of different religious groups.

AGREED: that the application be deferred to allow additional information to be gained.

B2) Igniting Hip Hop – request for £1,000 from 2Funky Arts Ltd

To pay for a contribution towards an after-school hip-hop theatre project at Moat Community College.

AGREED: that £750 be awarded from the Ward Community Fund.

B3) Sensational Vibes Youth Group – request for £250 from Kamala Smyle-Wisdom.

To retrospectively pay for fabric and materials, room hire, dance instructor, lorry hire, a generator and a DJ.

AGREED: that the application be refused in light of the request for retrospective funding.

B4) Youth-Tide Christmas Party – request for £866 from Gavan Wilmot
To pay for dining and performances for up to 20 elderly residents, hosted by young people.

AGREED: that £500 be awarded from the Community Cohesion Fund.

B5) Community Fund Basketball Sessions – request for £1,345 from Karl Brown.
To pay for equipment, t-shirts, publicity and tuition.

AGREED: that the application be deferred to allow additional information to be gained.

B6) Football in the City Project – request for £1,350 from Inner City Club Football
To pay for the facilities used for training purposes.

AGREED: that £1,000 be awarded from the Ward Community Fund.

B7) Lets Connect – request for £4,426 by Somali Youth Organisation
To pay for a project to enable social integration between young people from different cultures and social backgrounds.

AGREED: that the application be deferred to allow additional information to be gained.

B8) Space for Young People – request for £3,300 by Somali Parents Association.
To pay for room hire, the purchasing of equipment and materials, refreshments, publicity and stationary.

AGREED: that £1,000 be awarded from the Ward Community Cohesion Fund.

B9) Eid Celebration – request for £750 from Sunni Muslim Katchi Association
To pay towards venue, publicity and catering costs

AGREED: that £750 be awarded from the Community Cohesion Fund.

66. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair agreed to accept one item of urgent business:

Update on Integrated Services Hubs

Penny Hajek, Director, Access, Inclusion and Participation and Mel Meggs, Head of Service, Early Prevention, were in attendance to inform those present of developments to the Integrated Services Hubs initiative. It was explained that integrated services for young people in Leicester were being developed, and this would bring together all services for 0-19 year olds, and that this would improve the effectiveness and co-ordination of service provision for the 13-19 age group, as each locality would have a youth support centre. The overall aim of the programme was to improve outcomes for all children and young people and to allow earlier access to services.

Penny reported that Integrated Services was piloted in 2008 and was now being rolled out to the rest of the city.

In addition, we will be developing integrated youth support teams that will support co-ordinated support to young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes. The team will be located at a 'hub' in each neighbourhood. The Local Authority is also wishing to develop a youth support centre to develop high quality youth provision in each neighbourhood. This may also house the Integrated Youth Support Team. For integrated provision for children 0-12 after 1st April 2010, the Children's Centres will take responsibility for the development and co-ordination of provision in each neighbourhood.

Penny also explained that a letter had been received from a young person within the Spinney Hills Ward, which outlined some concerns about youth provision locally. The young person in question had been invited to meet with the Strategic Director, Children, to discuss these concerns.

In response to a query from a Councillor, Penny confirmed that various consultative events in respect of the initiative had taken place during the past 18 months. Such an event was held in Spinney Hills in 2008, where key stakeholders were informed of what a future service could look like. In response to a query from a member of the Public, Penny agreed to provide a list of attendees who were present at this event.

It was agreed that a presentation around Integrated Service Hubs be brought to the next meeting.

67. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

