

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 4 October 2010

Held at: Thurnby Lodge Youth & Community Centre, Thurncourt Road, LE5 2NG

Councillors in Attendance

Councillor John Allen

Councillor Caroline Scuplak

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.

Health Through Warmth Scheme Officers from the Home Energy Office gave advice on how this scheme could help those vulnerable to the cold due to ill health	Housing Issues Officers were available to talk about issues regarding to Council-owned housing
Highways and Transportation Officers were available to talk about highways and transportation issues in Thurncourt	Environmental Improvements – Big Switch Off Information was available on the Big Switch Off programme
Police Issues Local Police Officers were present for people to discuss issues in the Ward or raise general queries	Community Meeting Budgets and Enquiries Officers were available to provide advice on Community Meeting Budgets and answer general enquiries

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.

15. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Scuplak was elected as Chair for the meeting.

The Ward Councillors and officers then introduced themselves to the meeting.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared

17. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2010 were approved as a correct record.

18. HOUSING ISSUES

HOUSING ISSUES

a) Housing Management and Refurbishment of Properties

Chrissie Field, (Leicester City Council's new Area Manager for Humberstone and Rowlatts Hill), introduced herself to the meeting, explaining that area management of the City had been reorganised, so that Team Leaders were now the first point of contact on housing matters. As Area Manager, Chrissie was responsible for writing an Area Plan for her areas of responsibility. She also had to try to attract external funding to the service, although it was recognised that this was difficult in the current economic conditions.

Chrissie Field then gave an update on the City Council's kitchen and bathroom refurbishment programme for its housing stock:-

- Various criteria had to be met, including whether a property was 30 years old or more and whether significant repairs had not been done recently. Specific repairs were listed in the criteria that disqualified properties from bathroom and kitchen refurbishment;
- To date, 346 Leicester Standard kitchens and 377 Bathrooms for Life had been installed;
- As part of the 2010/11 Capital Programme, it was hoped to install 29 further kitchens and bathrooms; and
- A problem had been encountered with the shape of one type of kitchen in certain bungalows, in that some bathroom space had to be used to accommodate the kitchen.

The following points were made during discussion on this and in response to questions:-

- Dave Pate, (Director of Housing Services with Leicester City Council), explained that the amount of redecoration grant that was given to people who had had refurbishment work done was reviewed every year as part of the Housing Revenue Grant, although it had not increased for a number of years. It would be considered again this year as part of the budget process;
- Chrissie Field undertook to find out whether the bungalows referred to above, which had a difficult shaped kitchen, were mixed in with other types of housing, or whether they were all located together;
- Kitchens usually would be refurbished when properties were void, to avoid disrupting tenants;
- It would not be possible to let the Council's workers redecorate properties they refurbished, due to budget constraints. (The Council had stopped doing internal redecoration work some years ago, which was why the redecoration allowance now was given);
- Dave Pate explained that, if contractors did not do their work properly, or created problems for tenants, the Council needed to be told about it. The Council then would consider what had happened and find the most appropriate way to resolve the situation;
- Tenants were advised by operatives that having three ad hoc items replaced in their kitchen could mean that they had lower priority for a full refurbishment. The possibility of introducing a standardised leaflet to remind people of this would be considered;
- If repairs to work were needed within a guarantee period, the Council would do these and recharge the contractor;
- Cases would be assessed on their individual merits when requests for work were received. Each case was given points based on need and work allocated to those with the highest number of points first;
- There currently was a 35 day turn-round for properties when empty, but officers recognised that this was too long. Work was underway to reduce this time, but government requirements regarding items such as working with asbestos and electrical work could slow down the work being done;
- The feasibility of giving neighbours notice of when work was to be done on properties, to try and minimise disruption, would be considered; and
- There currently was no loft insulation programme running. The Council reacted to individual requests received for loft insulation to be installed. It also was anticipated that properties that needed their lofts insulated would be identified through the annual home check.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Investigations to be made in to whether the bungalows which had a difficult shaped kitchen were mixed in with other types of housing, or whether they were all located together	Chrissie Field	Next meeting

b) Decent Homes Standard

Paul Lowe, (Planning and Major Works Manager (Housing Services) with Leicester City Council), reminded the meeting that the Decent Homes Standard had been introduced approximately 11 years ago. Leicester City Council had been successful in achieving this. He further advised that:-

- At present 1,222 of Thurncourt Ward's 1,232 properties now met the Standard;
- Of the properties that currently did not meet the Standard, 3 needed new boilers, 3 needed their kitchens refurbished, 5 needed their bathrooms refurbished and 1 needed to be rewired;
- To date, £128,709 had been spent in the Thurncourt Ward to bring properties up to the Decent Homes Standard; and
- It had been identified that some roof covers in Stornaway Road needed replacing.

Paul Lowe then explained that the City Council had introduced a Mobile Works and Repairs service. Under this, the City had been divided in to 6 areas and work was allocated to staff on an area basis. Individual jobs were sent to operatives out in the field through a hand-held computer. Materials for standard jobs were kept loaded in vans and stayed with the operative. These were replenished, or additional materials were provided, by lorries delivering to the vans while out in the field, so the vans did not need to return to the depot.

This way of working had several advantages. For example, the number of jobs being completed on an operative's first visit had increased from approximately 73% to nearly 90% and, as operatives stayed in the same patch, they got to know the properties in that area and the tenants.

In response to questions, Paul Lowe explained that:-

- Vans were required to adhere to parking restrictions wherever the operatives were working. This included not parking on grass verges;
- The multi-tasking approach to repairs work appeared to be working well. In addition, the first group of apprentices were beginning finish their training, so the number of operatives trained in a number of work areas was increasing.

c) Choice Based Lettings System (“HomeChoice”)

Suzanne Collins, (Property Lettings Manager with Leicester City Council), then gave a presentation on the Council’s Choice Based Lettings Scheme, (“Leicester HomeChoice”), a copy of which is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

During the presentation, Suzanne Collins drew particular attention to the following:-

- The City Council’s allocations policy was unchanged, but all properties available were advertised and people then applied for which properties they would like to be considered for;
- No additional housing was available, but some housing associations now let some or all of their properties through this scheme;
- At present, all applications needed to be made on an application form. It was anticipated that people soon would be able to apply on-line, which it was hoped would be quicker;
- If someone was eligible to go on the register, they would be sent a letter confirming this and setting out how many points they had. Their PIN number was sent out separately, for security;
- Applicants for each property were electronically ranked in order of priority, based on the number of points they had. As properties were allocated on a points basis, not a first-come first-served basis, it did not matter when in the cycle someone expressed an interest in a particular property;
- Applicants could apply for up to 3 properties per week that they were eligible for, but there was no requirement to do so;
- Anyone could refuse up to three offers of property in a 12-month period, but they only would be offered property they had expressed an interest in;
- If applicants’ reasons for refusing a property were acceptable under the policy, they could receive more offers. However, if their reasons were not acceptable, their points total would be reduced for 12 months;
- Vulnerable people could use an auto-select option, whereby the computer automatically selected properties for which they were eligible. They were not obliged to accept such properties and could apply in the usual way if they wished;
- It was hoped that in the future private landlords also could let property through the HomeChoice system; and
- In response to a question, it was advised that brochure costs were kept to a minimum by only printing approximately 100 copies per week and updating it electronically. It was anticipated that the number printed would reduce as

people became more familiar with the system and made more use of the electronic brochure.

d) Housing Capital Improvement Works

Marlene Blake, (a Neighbourhood Housing Team Leader with Leicester City Council), introduced information on housing capital improvement works, which had been tabled at the meeting. A copy of this is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

It was noted that the proposals for the schemes came from a variety of sources, including tenants and officers working on the patch. Officers advised that all of the schemes submitted for 2010/11 had been approved and drew particular attention to the following:-

- The covert cameras would be kept centrally in the Ward until needed, as many reports were received of cases that needed surveillance. It was anticipated that between 8 and 10 cameras would be bought, depending on the quality of the cameras;
- If the cameras were lent to other areas, this would be on a short-term basis and Thurncourt residents would take priority;
- Good results had been obtained from using covert cameras in other areas and housing inspectors favoured their use. Legal action would be taken if considered appropriate from the evidence gathered;
- Surveillance could be undertaken as long as the cameras did not go over the boundary of the property from which surveillance was being undertaken. If surveillance of a wider area was needed, the Council had to put up notices advising that cameras were in the locality, (although it did not have to reveal where any cameras were located);
- Requests for covert surveillance to be undertaken could be made to either the Police or the City Council; and
- Letters advising that the request for funding had been successful were being prepared to send to people affected by the fencing schemes.

e) Thurnby Lodge Housing Office

Dave Pate, (Director of Housing Services with Leicester City Council), advised the meeting that, due to a shortage of officers to the City's current housing offices, a decision recently had been taken to close the Thurnby Lodge Housing Office for three days per week on a temporary basis. This was starting this week.

Dave Pate stressed that this had not been an easy decision, but enabled staff to be concentrated where there was the largest footfall per hour. Unfortunately, the number of visitors to the Thurnby Lodge office averaged less than 3 people per hour.

Most visitors went to the office to make payments, but there were other facilities in the area they could use for this purpose.

Residents expressed anger that it appeared that it had taken press and media reports for the Council to realise that residents saw the Thurnby Lodge Housing Office as the core of the estate. Residents further stated that:-

- a petition against the proposals was being prepared;
- as they paid their rents to the Council, they expected a certain level of service in return; and
- Although consultation had been carried out through the Tenants and Residents Association, this had only been a general consultation on the possibility of some offices closing. No particular offices had been identified, which lacked transparency.

In reply, Dave Pate explained that the change in opening hours was being made on a temporary basis. A long-term decision would not be made until January 2011, when the budgets for 2011/12 were being considered. At present, it was not known what the government's spending review on 20 October 2010 would contain, but it already had suggested that a 25% reduction in some services could be required. This could impact on any decision to be made, as the service was legally required to balance its accounts. Residents would be consulted on any changes proposed.

In summary, residents at the meeting expressed their opposition to the closure of the Thurnby Lodge Housing Office and the Ward Councillors thanked all present for their contribution to the debate.

19. HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

a) Road Re-Surfacing

Alan Adcock, (Head of Highway Maintenance with Leicester City Council), gave a presentation on Highway Maintenance, a copy of which is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

During the presentation, Alan Adcock drew particular attention to the following:-

- Priorities for the Council were changing, moving away from a focus on main roads to a focus on local (residential) routes;
- The roads in the City were valued at approximately £1.2 billion, making them the City Council's largest asset and largest liability;
- The City Council had a statutory obligation to maintain the roads in a safe condition;
- Changes in the Local Transport Plan meant that it now was more focussed on sustainability, air quality and cycle routes;

- Government accounting procedures required the Council to show that it was spending enough to maintain the asset;
- Due to the current financial situation, the Council only had enough funds to implement the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) objectives of optimising the safety of the network and focussing on the user. This meant it was unable to fulfil the TAMP objectives of optimising network serviceability and sustainability;
- The Council had received £200,000 Winter Damage Emergency Funding from the Department for Transport, but this was not enough to make much difference to the Council's budgets;
- Climate change meant that the country was experiencing more extreme weather events and that these would get more frequent, (for example, the amount of rainfall and high temperatures, which could damage road surfaces);
- Although an additional £1 million had been agreed for the highway maintenance programme, other highway schemes had been lost;
- The Thurncourt Ward currently did not have any urgent highway maintenance schemes outstanding;
- Fewer complaints were received about concrete roads than other types of roads, as they did not get potholes, although they could collapse. The main cause of problems for most road surfaces was water getting under the surface and then freezing and thawing, but water did not usually get in to concrete roads;
- If problems were encountered with concrete roads, the short-term solution was to fill them as quickly as possible. The long-term solution was to resurface them;
- Exposed granite setts usually could be repaired by patching, as they often were only approximately 20 millimetres below the surface;
- The City Council had not run out of grit during the exceptional weather during the winter of 2009/10, although supplies had been low. In addition:
 - there were approximately 170 grit bins around the City; and
 - three new handgritters, (for use in areas such as car parks), had been bought; and
- the City Council worked very closely with the County Council on various matters, including the winter gritting of roads, but as much as possible was done in-house.

During discussion on the presentation, Alan Adcock gave the following replies to questions:-

- in recent years the Council had not had sufficient resources to be able to seal joints in concrete roads to prevent water getting in and weed growth;
- statutory undertakers who could need to dig up roads were advised when the Council was doing works to roads, so that they could co-ordinate any work needed, and were not allowed to disturb a resurfaced road for 12 months after resurfacing. Quarterly meetings were held with statutory undertakers to try and facilitate this, but it was recognised that there would be occasions when emergency work needed doing;
- all highways were dealt with in the same way, irrespective of whether they were in private or Council housing areas;
- the possibility of obtaining funding for remedial work from the European Union had been investigated, but this funding tended to be for large capital programmes;
- anyone requesting that a dropped kerb be created should contact Alan Adcock, (Head of Highway Maintenance with Leicester City Council); and
- the drainage problems in the grassed area in Croyland Green would be investigated and consideration given to whether the access area could be enlarged, so that vehicles did not have to drive over the grassed area.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
The drainage problems in the grassed area in Croyland Green to be investigated	Alan Adcock	Next meeting
Consideration to be given to whether the access area can be enlarged so that vehicles do not have to drive over the grassed area	Alan Adcock	Next meeting

b) Traffic Calming in Nursery Road

Graham Seaton, (Transport Development Officer with Leicester City Council), reminded the meeting that concern previously had been expressed over the possibility that bolts could break on the traffic calming road humps in Nursery Road.

Officers had contacted a number of other authorities who had considerable experience of using this type of road hump. It had been found that there were no reported problems for the other authorities contacted.

c) Accidents at the Junction of The Parkway and Havencrest Drive

Graham Seaton, (Transport Development Officer with Leicester City Council), confirmed that a treatable problem at the junction of The Parkway and Havencrest Drive had been identified, as there had been 3 personal injury accidents reported there over the last 5 years. As a remedial measure, it was recommended that give-way signs and markings should be installed, in conjunction with double yellow lines round the corner. It was proposed that this would be included in a bid for funding from LTP3. The outcome of this would not be known until summer 2011.

The Ward Councillors requested that the Community Meeting be kept informed of progress with this bid and suggested that, if the bid was unsuccessful, consideration could be given to using unallocated Community Meeting budgets for this purpose.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
The Community Meeting to be kept informed of progress with the bid for safety works to the junction of The Parkway and Havencrest Drive	Steve Warrington	As appropriate
If the above bid is unsuccessful, consideration to be given to funding some or all of the work from unallocated Community Meeting budgets	Steve Warrington / Francis Connolly	As appropriate

d) Bus Shelter in Bowhill Grove

The meeting noted that the Bowhill Grove bus stop was being level accessed during the coming week and the shelter should go in very shortly after that. Dates for this would be known during the week beginning 11 October 2010.

20. CITY WARDEN SERVICE

Darren Evans, (City Warden with Leicester City Council), gave a verbal update to the meeting on his recent work, including the following points:-

- Progress was being made on removing graffiti from Averil Road and Ocean Road;
- His work in the coming months would focus on reducing dog fouling and would include an increase in the number of patrols made around the shops on Thurncourt Road, to try to reduce the amount of dog fouling there;
- He would be working more with the Police on issues of concern to residents;
- Over the winter, he would be available at the Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre on a daily basis, to discuss issues of concern with residents.

A notice of the times at which he would be available would be put up as soon as possible;

- The bins causing problems at the flats in St Austell Road had been removed; and
- He would welcome the opportunity to make a full presentation to the next Community Meeting on what had been achieved over recent months.

A resident thanked Darren Evans for the prompt way in which graffiti in the area of the Park Way shops had been dealt with. Darren Evans confirmed that work to remove graffiti from other areas was ongoing.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
A notice of the times at which the City Warden would be available to meet residents at the Thurnby Lodge Community Centre to be put up at the Centre	Darren Evans	As soon as possible
A full presentation to be made to the next Thurncourt Community Meeting on what the City Warden had achieved in recent months	Darren Evans (Francis Connolly/ Elaine Baker to note)	Next meeting

21. UPDATE ON POLICING ISSUES

Sergeant Danny Graham, (Leicestershire Constabulary's new Neighbourhood Sergeant for Thurncourt), introduced himself to the meeting and outlined his career to date.

Sergeant Graham gave a verbal report on policing issues in the Thurncourt Ward, highlighting the following points:-

- The Neighbourhood Team for the Ward comprised two Police Community Support Officers, two Beat Officers and Sergeant Graham;
- There had been 701 crime reports, which was significantly less than the number in most other Local Policing Units;
- Of these, 238 were classified as "non-crimes", leaving 463 crimes. This was the lowest out of the five neighbourhood beats in the Spinney Hill Park Local Policing Unit;
- The highest number of reported crimes in the Ward were for assault and harassment;

- There had only been one case of grievous bodily harm and an offender had been charged to court for this;
- The Neighbourhood Policing Team worked with partners to reduce issues such as anti-social behaviour, damage and graffiti. The Police and their partners tried to clean up quickly after incidents such as these, as it had been found that this reduced the risk of other offending behaviour arising in the same location;
- 52 burglaries had been reported, including 12 attempted burglaries. These were investigated by a dedicated team, based at the Hinckley Road Police Station, not the Neighbourhood Team;
- Anti-social behaviour had reduced by over 10% on last year's figures. Previously, anti-social behaviour had not been recorded in a crime management format, but changing to do so had proved to be a useful tool;
- Recorded crime was low and had reduced by 25% on the same three months last year and by nearly 50% over the year; and
- The Police now had GPS on their radios. In addition, a way marker had been set up in St Austell Road, so it was possible to direct patrols there and monitor when they had been there. This had been very useful in helping to reduce crime figures.

Sergeant Graham then advised that one of the issues on which the current Problem Solving Plan focussed was anti-social behaviour, in particular parties at the flats in St Austell Road. However, an acceptable behaviour contract had been issued to the people concerned and it was hoped that this would resolve the problems. As not much anti-social behaviour was being reported now in the area of the shops in Thurncourt Road, this would no longer be included in the Plan.

Other issues included in the Plan were criminal damage, (in particular at Willowbrook Primary School and Thurnby Lodge Primary School), and problems associated with young people gathering in Kinross Avenue.

22. WARD BUDGET 2010/11

a) Ward Budget 2010/11 – Latest Position

Mary-Louise Harrison, (Members' Support Officer with Leicester City Council), updated the meeting on the Ward budget for 2010/11, as follows:-

13,835 remained for the current year, which was broken down as:

- £9,860 in the Ward Action Plan;
- £2,000 in Community Cohesion Fund; and
- £1,975 in Community Fund

Mary-Louise Harrison also explained that expenditure to date included £140 that had been fast-tracked since the last meeting for weed killer for use on the allotments at Colchester Road.

b) Grant Applications

i) Parents Get Active in Thurnby!

The meeting was reminded that this application had been considered at the last meeting, but a decision had been deferred, as more information was needed, (Minute 11(d), "Budget – Parents Get Active in Thurnby!", 5 July 2010 referred).

It was noted that the current bid was significantly lower than the previous application, being for £1,173 towards the cost of two weekly fitness sessions in Thurnby over a period of 15 weeks. Shelley Osborne, (Community Development Worker at Thurnby Lodge Children's Centre), advised that these sessions would be available to Thurncourt residents. However, as she was employed to work with residents from the Humberstone and Hamilton Ward, the crèche would have to be open to these residents as well, although it was felt that, due to the distance they would have to travel, they would be unlikely to attend.

The meeting considered that it should only be supporting activities that were of benefit to the residents of the Thurncourt Ward. It therefore was

RECOMMENDED:

that funding of £1,173 from the Ward Community Fund be supported for the provision of two weekly fitness sessions over a period of 15 weeks by "Parents Get Active in Thurnby!", on the condition that this be only for residents of Thurncourt Ward, this to be achieved through using a venue in Thurncourt and using people's post codes to ensure that residents live in the relevant area.

ii) Christchurch Parochial Church Council

The meeting was reminded that an application from the Christchurch Parochial Church Council for funding for the refurbishment of chairs had been circulated with the agenda. Examples of the current condition of the chairs and how they looked after refurbishment were shown to the meeting. It was noted that the chairs had been second hand when bought and had been well used since then, both by church members and members of the community who hired the premises for various functions.

It also was noted that the cost of new chairs had been calculated as £1,405, plus VAT. A breakdown of these costs was tabled at the meeting and is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

To date, approximately £500 had been raised through voluntary contributions from church members. Fundraising activities already were undertaken to meet normal running costs of the church, so it was difficult raise funds for special projects such as this.

RECOMMENDED:

that funding of £1,405 from the Ward Action Plan be supported for the refurbishment of chairs at Christchurch.

iii) Thurnby Lodge TARA (Friday Club)

It was noted that, since the agenda had been circulated, applications for funding had been received from the Thurnby Lodge Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) for £300 to help establish a Friday Club, (a new social club), and hold a Christmas party for its members. Details of these applications were tabled at the meeting.

The applications were introduced by representatives of the Tara, who drew particular attention to the following points:-

- £98 had been requested to help finance the first three months of operation;
- The Friday Club had started with 5 members, but now had approximately 20;
- Members would be asked to pay £4 each;
- It had been hoped that the Friday Club would encourage the use of the Community Centre and membership of the Centre already had increased;
- The Friday Club was affiliated to the TARA, so was not constituted separately; and
- The Treasurer of the TARA had agreed to maintain the financial records of the Friday Club and would meet the leaders of the Club regularly to advise on the best use of funds.

RECOMMENDED:

that funding of £300 from the Community Cohesion fund be supported towards establishing a Friday Club in association with the Thurnby Lodge Tenants and Residents Association and holding a Christmas party for the Club.

iv) Thurnby United Reserves – Football Kit

It was noted that, since the agenda had been circulated, an application for funding had been received from the Thurnby United Reserves football team for £250 to buy new football kit for the team. Details of this application were tabled at the meeting.

Particular attention was drawn to the following points:-

- The team had raised £50 itself, so had applied for the balance of the cost;
- Most of the players were out of work, so it was hard to charge them a full subscription. At present, the organisers paid for a lot of things themselves;
- The kit being used was very old and so had become very worn;

- Approximately 90% of the team's members lived within Thurncourt Ward;
- The team played at the Boys Club; and
- In the longer term, it was hoped that the club could expand and run more teams.

RECOMMENDED:

that funding of £250 be supported from the Ward Action Plan towards the purchase of kit for the Thurnby United reserves football team.

v) Leicester East Dance/Theatre Group – Sadlers Wells Experience

It was noted that, since the agenda had been circulated, an application for funding had been received from the Leicester East Dance/Theatre Group for £1,670 towards costumes and bus hire. Details of this application were tabled at the meeting.

Jill Coe, of the Leicester East Dance/Theatre Group, advised the meeting that the Group had been invited to showcase its work at Sadlers Wells. It was hoped that as many students as possible could be included, but some parents could not afford to pay for this experience. Approximately half of the Group's members lived within Thurncourt Ward, the remainder coming from Humberstone and Hamilton Ward.

Jill Coe explained that the Group had now paid £495 towards bus hire and would continue fund raising to meet as many of the remaining costs as possible itself, but would welcome any assistance that could be given.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that, in view of the number of members of the Group who live in Thurncourt Ward, funding of £580 be supported from the Ward Action Plan to the Leicester East Dance/Theatre Group towards the cost of costumes and bus hire for a Sadlers Wells Experience; and
- 2) that the Leicester East Dance/Theatre Group be advised to apply to Humberstone and Hamilton Community Meeting for additional funding, but if not funding is available from that source, a further application for funding will be considered by this Meeting.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
Leicester East Dance/Theatre Group to be advised to apply to Humberstone and Hamilton Community Meeting for additional funding	Mary-Louise Harrison / Francis Connolly	As soon as possible
If no funding is available from the Humberstone and Hamilton Community Meeting, a further	Francis Connolly	As needed

application to be made to this meeting if wished by the Leicester East Dance/Theatre Group		
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vi) 1st Thurnby Lodge Brownies – Pack Holiday

It was noted that, since the agenda had been circulated, an application for funding had been received from the 1st Thurnby Lodge Brownie pack for £1,495 towards its annual pack holiday. Details of this application were reported at the meeting.

Representatives of the Brownie pack explained that some parents could not afford the estimated cost of £140 per person, but if they were able to attend this would be the only holiday that some of the Brownies had.

RECOMMENDED:

that funding of £1,495 be supported from the Ward Action Plan to the 1st Thurnby Lodge Brownies towards its annual pack holiday.

vii) Other Applications

Although no formal applications for funding had been made, the Meeting was asked if it would give in principle support to two applications from the Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre.

Representatives of the Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre explained that users of the Centre were able to borrow a wheelchair owned by the Centre. This could be used at the Centre, or in the community in an emergency. The service had been well used and the wheelchair was now in a state of disrepair. It had not been possible to find replacement parts, so the Centre was considering buying a new wheelchair at a cost of between £175 and £286. The Meeting expressed the view that this was the type of application it was likely to support, but no commitment could be given until full information was known.

Representatives of the Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre also explained that fruit currently was being picked from people’s trees and bushes, but the freezers used for food for the Tuesday Lunch Club were full. It therefore was proposed to buy a chest freezer, at a cost of approximately £435. There currently were approximately 30 – 40 members of the Tuesday Lunch Club, so the freezer would be well used for food bought in bulk throughout the year.

It was noted that the freezer was needed quickly, but the Community Meeting could not approve retrospective funding if it was bought before the next meeting. However, as the amount to be requested was less than £500, there was provision for the application to be fast-tracked between meetings.

The Meeting expressed the view that this was the type of application it was likely to support, but no commitment could be given until full information was known. The Centre therefore was recommended to submit an application for funding as soon as possible for consideration through the fast-track process.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
If an application for funding of less than £500 is received from the Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre's Tuesday Lunch Club for the purchase of a chest freezer, this to be considered through the fast-track process	Mary-Louise Harrison / Francis Connolly	As soon as possible

23. THURNCOURT WARD ACTION PLAN

In view of the lateness of the hour, this item was deferred.

24. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

NOTED:

that further Thurncourt Community Meetings will be held on Monday, 17 January 2011 and Monday, 4 April 2011 at Thurnby Lodge Youth and Community Centre, the information Fair at each meeting to start at 6.00 pm and the main meeting on each date to start at 6.30 pm.

25. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Proposed Demonstration by English Defence League


Sergeant Danny Graham, (Leicestershire Constabulary's Neighbourhood Sergeant for Thurncourt), invited people to speak to him after the meeting if they had any concerns about the proposed demonstration by the English Defence League in Leicester City centre on Saturday, 9 October.

26. CLOSE OF MEETING


The meeting closed at 9.09 pm




Purpose of Today



- Provide an overview of Leicester HomeChoice
 - A choice based lettings scheme – a simpler more flexible way of offering social housing properties where the applicant plays an active part in the process.
- Benefits
 - Transparent
 - Gives good information, advertises all empty properties
 - Informs decision making
 - Shows results of lets
 - Efficient use of housing stock
 - Don't sit and wait for an offer – actively participate
- Policy remains the same, based on need
- No additional housing but more visible housing
- Government target end of December 2010.




How does it work?




- Step 1: Fill in an application form
- Step 2: Get a registration number and security pin
- Step 3: Look for and choose a property
- Step 4: Apply for your chosen property – 3 per week
- Step 5: We offer the property
- Step 6: Look at the results

Cycle Opens: Weds am
Cycle Closes: Monday Midnight (6 days)




Step 1



Fill in an application form.

- Available from:
 - Downloadable from the LHC web site
 - Pick up from the Property Shop at Housing Options
 - Request by telephone 0116 252 7008
 - Visit your local Neighbourhood Housing Office
 - Visit a Customer Service Centre

Fill in form and return in order to participate in the scheme.



Step 2



Get your registration number

– If eligible to go on the housing register you will be sent a registration number followed by a security pin number. (Target to register 10 days)

Keep these safe and use them when applying for properties.

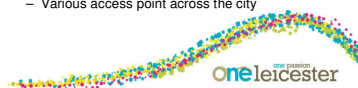


Step 3



Look for and choose a property

- We will advertise all Leicester HomeChoice properties, you can view them at:
 - The LHC web site
 - Free at Libraries – book a slot
 - Free at NHOs and Community Centres - planned
 - Property Shop at Housing Options Centre
 - Kiosks, PC and display boards
 - Interactive television services
 - The weekly vacancy sheet
 - Various access point across the city



Visit our Property Shop @ HOC



Step 4

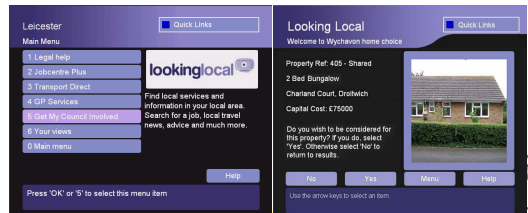


Apply for your chosen property

- Once you have found a property you like you can apply at
 - The web site
 - The automated telephone line – local call rates apply
 - Interactive television – broadband connection
 - By Text
 - Property Shop, using the kiosks, PC's and by phone
 - At NHO via courtesy phones
 - Customer Services via Courtesy phones
 - Libraries, via a booked internet slot
- You will need your HA ref No; Security Pin No; and the Property Advert Reference No.



Interactive Television Services



Step 5



We will offer each property

- We will make a list of all the people who applied for each property .
- We will contact the successful applicant to offer them the property.
- If you have not heard within 7 working days of the deadline it is unlikely you have been successful.
- If you refuse your offer we cannot guarantee that you will receive one of your other property choices. On refusal of an offer your application will become live again and you will be able to apply again in the following week.



Step 6

Look at the results



- We will provide regular results to show how the properties are let. I.e. Size, Type, Number of people interested
- This will help decide what properties to apply for.





When can I apply?

Advertising Cycle:

- Opens Wednesday 6am
- Closes Monday midnight of the following week

- **Not first come first served.**



Busy on Wednesdays!

Visitors Overview

9 Jun 2010 - 29 Jul 2010



How many properties can I apply for each week?

- Can apply for up to 3 properties a week.
- After 3 refusals in a rolling 12 month period you will be placed on reduced points. A further 3 offers may be allowed depending on refusal reasons.
- Homeless cases are encouraged to use all 3 of their choices each week - if they do not this will be done automatically for them.



Help and Advice



- **Housing and our partners will:**
 - Explain how to use the scheme.
 - Advise where you can access the scheme.
 - Advise where properties are advertised.
 - Help filling in application forms.
 - Provide the guide in different languages/formats.
 - Provide information on other housing options.
 - Put people in touch with agencies who may be able to assist.
 - Allow a friend/family member or support worker to apply on your behalf.



Performance: Bidding Activity



- 51609 bids received to date (up to 30.10.10)
- 2150 average bids per cycle
- Most bids in Week 20 - 2737
- 92% (47538) bids via website
- Property Shop kiosks 2nd - 5%
- Use of telephone & text consistent use every week.



What Next for Leicester HomeChoice?



- Private Landlords
- Mutual Exchanges
- Allocations Policy Review
- Future Sub-Regional Working
- Working with community and peer groups



Key messages to take away

- Process change, not a policy change – points remain.
- Proactive involvement on the part of the applicant.
- No more additional properties (although one point of access for social housing in Leicester means more housing is visible).
- No re-advertising unless shortlist runs out.
- Monitoring and contact of those not taking part in the scheme.
- Not a first come first served scheme.



Documents Available



- Leicester HomeChoice Guide
 - Translated into 5 languages
- A Quick Guide to LHC (steps 1-6 included in guide)
- Access Strategy
- Access Map
- Inclusion Strategy (derived from EIA)
- Frequently Asked Questions

All documents will be available in PDF format and are downloadable from the LHC website.



Thank You - any Questions



Contact Details:



- Suzanne Collins: Property Lettings Manager
- Tel: 0116 221 1105
- E Mail: cbl@leicester.gov.uk
- Info Web Address: www.leicester.gov.uk/homechoice
- LHC Web Address: www.leicesterhomechoice.co.uk



HOUSING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Schemes – Thurncourt Ward	Comments	Cost	Has consultation been carried out?	Meets all essential Criteria (See Below)							
					Safeguards the Council's assets	Reduce ongoing Revenue Costs	Employment/the economy within	Improves the lettable of the Councils housing stock	Tackles disadvantaged	Improve security of properties & estates	Meets the aspirations of tenants
Perimeter fencing Stornaway Road & Nursery Road	Continuation of Scheme	£7700	y	y	Y			Y	y	Y	y
Dividing fencing to: 1) Bowhill Grove & St Austell £6538 2) Fredscott & St Austell £ 1200	Provide separation from bungalows & flats	£7738	y	y	Y			Y	y	Y	y
Front perimeter fencing Trevoise Gardens	Continuation of Scheme	£12353	y	y	Y			Y	y	Y	y
Lightening Improvements to: Tuskar Road Vale Close Thurncourt Close £8750 per location	Lightening for safety of residents.	£26,250	y	y	Y				y	Y	y

Thurncourt Road Path	Install path	£1968	y	y					y	Y	y
13 – 23 Briar Road knee rail fencing	Planning for people not cars	£3168	y	y	Y	Y			y	Y	y
Sunbury green - 2 bollards	Planning for people not cars	£650	y	y	Y	Y			y	Y	y
Fastnet Road - 3 bollards	Planning for people not cars	£975	y	y	Y	Y			y	Y	y
Stockpile Covert cameras (10)	Consulted with Police & Community Safety Team	£6000	y	y	Y				y	Y	y
TOTAL		£66,802									

Essential Criteria:

Only require a capital injection (ie have no ongoing revenue costs)

Reinforce the value of housing improvements being undertaken

***Achieve good value for money, and
Exclusion***

Directly benefit local inhabitants

Improve the quality of life for local people

Complement the Governments wider policy objectives of Welfare to Work and Social

Thurncourt Ward Community Meeting 4th October 2010

Highway Maintenance

Alan Adcock
Head of Highway Maintenance
Leicester City Council



Highway Maintenance

- High Profile
- Public Interest –used by Everyone Everyday
- Priorities Now Changing
- Largest Asset



Highway Maintenance

- Covers maintenance of all highway features e.g. footways, roads, street lights, trees, verges, etc.
- Statutory obligations on the Council.
- Safety of the public is paramount.
- Influenced by Local Transport Plan (LTP) criteria, national guidelines and Codes of Practice (CoP).



Highway Asset Management (1)

- Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) sets out maintenance strategies.
- Prioritisation of works is based upon asset management approach.
- Condition surveys undertaken – various types: visual inspection to testing by machines
- Focus was on principal routes, which affect most users – and also linked to the LTP.



Highway Asset Management (2)

- Generally “worst first” approach due to limited funding.
- Whole Of Government Accounting
- TAMP Objectives:
 - To optimise network serviceability
 - To optimise the safety of the network
 - To optimise sustainability
 - To focus on the user –customer service



Safety Inspections

- In addition to condition surveys, statutory safety inspections carried out periodically.
- Identifies “urgent defects” – criteria defined by CoP
- Not all defects meet criteria.
- Limited funding means we cannot attend to many non-urgent defects.
- However, details are recorded for future potential maintenance schemes.



One We Did Earlier (Ocean Road/Thurncourt Road)



Current Highway Maintenance Issues

- Potholes
- Funding Availability
- Additional Funding
- Current and Future HM Strategy
- Statutory Undertakers Works
- Climate Change



Highway Maintenance Programme

- 77% of roads in City need maintenance work.
- £1 million extra funding confirmed in August.
- Programme of works being finalised.
- Able to start and address side streets.
- Tackling known problem areas across the City.
- Streets prioritised on condition - correlates with complaints received.



Problem Areas in Thurncourt Ward

- Thurncourt Road outside shops.
- Dudley Avenue Junction with Ocean Road
- Dudley Avenue - tarmac areas.
- Bowhill Grove section near Croyland Green.
- Brook Road junction with Scraftoft Lane.



Concrete Roads



'Pothole' Problems

- Causes
- Concrete Roads
- Solutions - Short Term
- Solutions – Medium Term



Concrete Road Problems (St Denys Road)



Ocean Road



Granite Setts Exposed



Pothole Problems



Pothole Problems



Treatment Options & Costs

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| • Patching Only | • £17 per square metre |
| • Patch & Surface Dressing | • £19 per sq.m |
| • Patch & Thin Surfacing | • £21.50 per sq.m |
| • Plane & Resurface | • £25 per sq.m |
| • Patch & Overlay | • £31 per sq.m |



Funding Available for 2010/11

- £700,000 for reactive repairs (dangerous defects/potholes).
- £207,000 from the Dept for Transport – Winter Damage Emergency Funding.
- £540,000 LTP Funding Re-Allocation
- £318,000 Additional City Council Funding this year.
- **Total = £1,065,000**



Winter Service ie Gritting

- Precautionary Gritting – 36% of road network
- Priority – Main roads, Bus routes, Commuter routes, Trouble Spots
- Resources Available
- Grit Bins
- ‘Team of the Year 2010’



Questions??



Minute Item 22

ChristChurch - Chair Project

130 chairs to be recovered (seats and backs) in a 67% wool 33% synthetic Tweed – in red or maroon as per sample already re-upholstered.

To have them re-upholstered professionally would cost in the region of £30 per chair, £3.900 to do them on a DIY basis would cost around a third of this.

We have done some calculations and checked prices on the internet as follows:

Materials required Estimated cost incl VAT @ 17.5%

Fabric – Excell Plus 54” Tweed – 50 metres @ £17.00 From Kirkhouse Productions	850.00
Bottom fabric – 54” – 16 metres @ £5.00 From Tetford Fabrics/Skiddaw Upholstery	80.00
Foam - ½” for the back, 1” for the seats, cut to size From E-Foam	350.00
Staples – 300 per chair = 39000 @ £5.70/5000 x 8 From the Upholstery Shop.co.uk	45.60
Spray adhesive say 3 cans @ £4.50 From The Upholstery Shop	13.50
Electric Staple Guns 2 @ £33.00 From The Upholstery Shop	66.00
Total (approximately £11 per chair)	£1405.10

Plan: Tackle 24 chairs (2 rows) at a time

Preparation – in the Church

- Seats and backs to be unscrewed from frames

Re-covering –

- Cut materials, re-upholstery in the hall

Refitting - in the church

- Screwing seats and backs to frames

Equipment needed

Work tables

Templates for cutting out

Scissors

2 Staple guns – preferably electric

Screwdrivers

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