

# **Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:30 pm, Monday, 14 May 2012**

**Held at: Soar Valley College, Gleneagles Avenue, LE4 7GY**

Who was there:

Councillor Culdipp Singh Bhatti MBE
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Councillor Piara Singh Clair MBE
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Councillor Ross Willmott
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## **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:-

- City Wardens
- Community Safety – Police
- General Council matters and other issues

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.

## **22. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Clair was elected as Chair for the meeting.

## **23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Umesh Patel (Headteacher of Herrick Primary School), Shobna Patel (Development Officer, Community Safety with Leicester City Council) and Councillor Willmott.

## **24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

## **25. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

## **26. SAINSBURY'S DEVELOPMENT , MELTON ROAD**

Tim Watkins, of Sainsbury's, explained that a planning application had now been submitted for the development of a new Sainsbury's store on the former GE Lighting site. It was proposed that this store would be approximately 80,000 square feet, (making it approximately the same size as the Sainsbury's store at Fosse Park), and would sell food and non-food items.

In addition, approximately one-third of the site had been reserved for B class uses. This included industrial businesses, but as there currently was no demand in the economy that part of the land would be held until it became viable to provide these businesses. Consequently, this aspect of the proposal was an outline planning application.

A high quality design was proposed for the new store, using a lot of glazing. Most of the building would be timber clad, (excluding the service yard), and there would be comprehensive site landscaping.

The customer and staff restaurants had been relocated since the first design proposals had been made and would now face on to Troon Way. They previously would have faced a blank wall, so the view would be improved and opportunities for anti-social behaviour reduced.

Environmental technologies would be used in the construction of the building, which it was hoped would combine to save 32% of the energy used. For example:-

- A ground source heat pump would be used to gather heat from approximately 200 metres down;
- Waste cold air from the fridges would be captured and used to cool the store;
- Natural daylight would be used in the building;
- Rainwater would be harvested;
- A Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme would be introduced to alleviate potential flooding issues, (for example, from the large car park);
- Waste food would be sent to anaerobic digesters, so none would go to landfill sites; and
- The car park would have cycle lanes and six charging points for electric cars.

It was anticipated that 300 new jobs would be created through this development. 140 of these would be offered to staff currently working at the Belgrave Road store. As many staff as possible would be employed from the local area.

It was explained that:-

- Sainsbury's offered various training and educational opportunities and had developed six food colleges around the United Kingdom, which offered accredited City and Guilds training;
- Sainsbury's always supported a local charity and had a "local heroes" scheme to recognise colleagues who did charity work;
- Products were sourced locally where possible, to reduce road miles;
- Small producers were encouraged to approach the supermarket with new ideas; and
- It was proposed that petrol would be sold at the new store.

Concern was expressed that there was only one entrance to the proposed store and that it could be dangerous to have cars and lorries using the same one. Steve Gosling, (a transport consultant working with Sainsbury's), explained that it was preferable to limit the points of access. As there were significant levels of transport adjacent to the site, it was proposed that there would be one access point, off Melton Road, from a new signal controlled junction. This would be capable of coping with all visitors to the site, as well as the proposed new business use.

Delivery vehicles also would use this entrance, but would use a service road once inside the site. It was likely that there would be approximately 12 articulated lorries coming on to the site over a whole day, which would try to avoid delivering during

peak times. This would be a lot fewer vehicles than had visited the former GE Lighting factory.

Sainsbury's recognised how busy the junction of Troon Way and Melton Road currently was and was concerned not to make it any worse. In order to improve it if possible, at no public cost, the next junction east along Troon Way would be improved. The signalling at the junction of Troon Way and Melton Road also would be improved and the bus lay-by relocated. Capacity through that junction would be increased by widening Troon Way either side of the junction.

It was suggested that, as there were two schools near this junction, it would be useful if a wider central refuge could be provided. Steve Gosling confirmed that this already was part of the proposal and was being incorporated in to the traffic signal design.

Automatic traffic counters had been used by Sainsbury's and the highway authority to see what peak and off-peak traffic flows were like. This also showed where traffic peaks matched retail peaks. Sainsbury's therefore was satisfied that the proposed highways works would improve the current situation and provide the necessary future capacity.

In order to encourage local people to apply for the jobs being created at the new store, employment opportunities would be promoted locally, (for example, through local job centres). Help in applying on-line would be provided at a local point, (such as a community centre), to ensure that no-one was disadvantaged. Jobs also would be created while the store was being built and would be available through the job centre. Jobs in-store would be advertised a few months before the store opened.

The Meeting noted that Keith Vaz, the local Member of Parliament, was unable to be at the meeting, but had tabled a letter supporting the proposal in principle, although he had some concerns about the impact on businesses on Melton Road and Belgrave Road.

It was questioned whether the community facilities referred to in Keith Vaz's letter had to be a community centre, or whether proposals from local residents would be considered. In reply, the Chair stressed that no decisions had been taken on this yet, including where any community facilities would be located. All parties would continue to listen to views being put forward.

In response to concerns, it was noted that the Council was not saying that the facilities had to be a community centre. The Meeting was reminded that the Council had proposed to provide a swimming pool in the Ward, but residents had rejected that idea, and that community and sport facilities were available at Soar Valley College.

The Meeting suggested that a leisure facility should be provided as well as a community facility. The Chair undertook to pass this on to Council officers.

It was noted that, if the necessary permissions could be obtained in the next few months, it was hoped that building work could start in early 2013. Steve Brown, (a

Team Leader with Leicester City Council's Planning Service), explained that the planning applications had a process to go through before they could be considered. For example, technical advice was being gathered and the views of the public sought. The applications had to be considered within planning rules and policies and the policy for this site was that its use should remain as employment. Employment was retained under this application, but consideration had to be given to whether the right balance of retail and employment had been included and to the impact on other retail areas.

Other factors that had to be considered were the environmental impact of the development, including the look of the store, car parking and whether highway facilities were acceptable.

As Sainsbury's wanted to move from its Belgrave Road site to this one, it was anticipated that the two elements would be considered together. In addition, an application from Asda for a new store in Abbey Lane had been considered by the City Council's Planning and Development Control Committee on 3 April 2012. Most of the elements of that proposal had been acceptable, but as it was known that the applications from Sainsbury's were pending, it had been recommended that Asda's application be considered with the two elements of the Sainsbury's application. If all the information required could be provided in time, it was possible that these reports could be considered by the City Council's Planning and Development Control Committee in mid- June.

In reply to a question, it was noted that Sainsbury's had a very strict code of conduct for building workers, including working closely with local people and agencies such as the Police to ensure that no problems were created by the building work. The protocol they worked to was that builders should be considerate at all times.

Some concern was expressed about the impact of the new development on local businesses. The representatives from Sainsbury's explained that previous experience had shown how the store could work with local businesses and help increase those businesses' turnover by encouraging new ways of working.

On behalf of the Meeting, the Chair thanked the representatives of Sainsbury's and the City Council officers for attending the meeting.

## **27. CITY WARDENS UPDATE**

Chirag Ruda and Bharat Patel, the new City Wardens for the Rushey Mead Ward, introduced themselves, explaining that both would be covering the work in this Ward as well as the Belgrave and Latimer Wards. Their main area of operation was in regard to environmental matters. Although they were not parking wardens, they were able to deal with the sale of cars on the road.

They advised that beat surgeries would continue on Gleneagles Avenue and they would be working closely with the Police to combat anti-social behaviour. Other work would include monitoring Watermead and going in to schools to educate pupils on issues such as litter.

A resident noted that all schools except three had participated in the recent smoking cessation programme. One of those not participating was Soar Valley College and it was asked if the College could be encouraged to do so. PC Rob Pountney, (Leicestershire Constabulary), advised that he had been asked to participate in assembly at the college on smoking and drugs during the coming week. He offered to raise its lack of response to the NHS programme during that time.

A resident suggested that it could be useful to involve youth and/or young adults in outreach work, such as school assemblies, as it could be difficult for professionals such as the City Wardens to come across well to that age group.

The following points also were noted:-

- Concern had been raised about rats on Cotton Street. The Wardens undertook to visit the area and, if necessary, undertake education work on the street to explain how rats could be discouraged;
- A resident explained that they were working with Herrick Primary School to create garden spaces in public areas. The Wardens suggested that it was possible they could help with providing materials for this;
- Bags of dog waste were being left on the green area on Troon Way opposite the proposed Sainsbury's site. The Wardens confirmed that this area was monitored regularly, but they would not always be there when people were doing this; and
- An old tree had been cut down at the Chinese House. It was not known if it had had a Tree Preservation Order on it, but this would be investigated.

## **28. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Applications for grants were considered as follows:-

### **Ladies Milan Mandar**

AGREED:

- 1) that the request for funding of £660 be not supported, due to the religious focus of the events for which funding was sought, contrary to the funding policy; and
- 2) that the Members Support Officer be asked to liaise with the applicants to explore alternative projects for which funding could be sought.

### **Sakhi Milan Ladies Group**

It was queried why this application was being considered at this meeting, as the applicant lived in the Belgrave and Latimer Community Meeting area. In reply, it was explained that the Group was based in Rushey Mead and used facilities there.

Some concern as expressed that this Group was very selective in who it allowed to join and so was not an open organisation.

AGREED:

That this application be deferred to enable the Members Support Officer to investigate the membership policy of this group.

### **Rushey Mead Diamond Jubilee Event**

As this application had been received after the agenda had been circulated, it was tabled at the meeting.

It was noted that:-

- This was a “drop in” event, that would be held over one afternoon; and
- The applicants would welcome being able to borrow any decorations from the Council that could be made available for this event.

AGREED:

- 1) That the request for funding of £500 be supported; and
- 2) That the Members Support Officer be asked to liaise with the City Council’s Festivals Unit to see if any items such as banners, or other decorations, could be loaned to the organisers of this event.

## **29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **a) Wild Fowl Feeding Awareness Campaign**

Paul Barker, (from Leicester City Council’s Parks Service), explained that Watermead Park had become overrun with geese, largely due to the amount of food that was being left for them. This caused various problems:-

- The geese could be intimidating to some people;
- There was a large volume of droppings in the car parks, which could be slippery;
- The grass at the park was being destroyed by the geese;
- The water was becoming polluted with goose droppings and uneaten food;
- There had been a big increase in the rat population, due to the amount of uneaten food there; and
- Other wildlife was being pushed out.

Paul Barker explained that much of the food being left for the geese was not good for them. For example, bread could be given in small amounts, but it did not contain



any nutrients. Cooked food was sometimes left, which was poisonous to the geese, as it contained salt, which they could not metabolise.

As a result of these problems, staff would be on site for four weeks in June to talk to people to encourage them to use the right food. Temporary and permanent notices giving advice about this also would be put up.

The Meeting welcomed this initiative, but questioned how it would be monitored. In reply, it was noted that staff would be on site from about 7.00 am and then for most of the rest of the day. Parks Wardens and the City Wardens could issue fines to people who continued to feed the geese inappropriately.

## **b) Police Update**

The Meeting welcomed Inspector Ed McBryde-Wilding, who had replaced Steve Rowley as the Keyham Lane Local Policing Unit Commander. He introduced himself and encouraged anyone who had a problem to contact the Police, as this helped them analyse where problems were occurring.

PC Rob Poutney advised that Operation Sapphire had seen a significant reduction in the number of burglaries in the Ward. For this operation, two marked vehicles had been parked, or used for patrols, in high visibility areas. As a result, there had been five burglaries in the last month, compared to twelve in the month before. In the same month in the previous year there had been eleven.

PC Poutney explained that overall there had been a slight reduction in the number of crimes recorded. The number of thefts from cars had reduced from ten to seven and theft from shops was down. However, there had been an increase of one in the number of bike thefts.

Residents noted that not many people were aware of the 101 telephone number that could be used to report problems. Suggested places for publicising this included local radio stations and putting posters on the front gates of schools and community centres, or at local shops, such as those on Nicklaus Road.

PC Poutney explained that he was passing on information about this when he could, but the scheme was run by the Council. He encouraged people to report all crimes to the Police, including if they were being intimidated for doing so. The 0116 222 2222 telephone number for the Police was still operational.

Residents explained that they did not know what they could do to help reduce crime. PC Poutney noted that community relations had more impact on crime than anything else. For example, it had been found that, when residents discussed crime together, such as through Neighbourhood Watch schemes, crime figures reduced significantly.

It was noted that the Police did not always have the resources to have a significant presence at large events, such as Diwali celebrations, but the number of officers on the streets was increased to cover such events. Some of these officers were drawn from areas less affected by such events, but as they were spread across the whole City it was not always obvious they were there. In addition, dedicated patrols were

put in to certain areas. Inspector McBryde-Wilding undertook to ensure that such information was communicated better, to reassure residents that measures were being taken.

Concern was expressed that banks were reducing the availability of safety deposit boxes. This meant that people could be keeping more gold at home. Inspector McBryde-Wilding offered to speak to local banks to see how this situation could be addressed.

**c) Dates of Future Meetings**

Thursday, 12 July 2012

Thursday, 11 October 2012

Thursday, 10 January 2013

Thursday, 14 March 2013

**30. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.57 pm