

# Castle Community Meeting

**Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:00 pm, Tuesday, 17 July 2012**

**Held at: Christ Church, Clarendon Park, Leicester**

Who was there:

Councillor Neil Clayton
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Councillor Patrick Kitterick
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Councillor Lynn Senior
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## **FORMAL SESSION**

### **47. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Kitterick was elected as Chair for the meeting.

### **48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Clayton declared a personal interest in Item 7 on the agenda 'Student Accommodation SPD', whilst not discussing individual applications, the agenda item was pertinent as there was an application on land next door to his home, and that if the item was discussed, he would not take part in the discussion and would leave the meeting.

Councillor Senior declared a personal interest in:

1. Her partner was an employee in Highways and Transportation at Leicester City Council;
2. Item 7 on the agenda 'Student Accommodation SPD', whilst not discussing individual applications, the agenda item was pertinent as there was an application on land next door to her home and that if the item was discussed, she would not take part in the discussion and would leave the meeting.
3. Item 7 on the agenda, and her partner advised on the transport side of planning applications;
4. Item 8 on the agenda 'Policing Update', that for the avoidance of doubt she was one of three representatives for Leicester City Council on the Police Authority Board.
5. Item 10, Budget items 1 and 2 – Councillor Senior declared an interest, as she was employed by Age UK who had a charity shop on Queen's Road.

### **50. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED;

that the minutes of the previous Castle Community Meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012 were approved as a correct record.

### **51. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Minute 42 – University of Leicester Community Overview

Carol Blackburn, local resident representative, asked that her contact telephone number be included on the minutes for information – (0116) 2706375, to allow people to provide feedback to the University.

## **52. ORANGE BAG RECYCLING SCHEME ROLL-OUT**

Jenny Loran and Sophie Glover, Waste Management were present to inform residents of the orange bag scheme that had been extended to flats in the area. Jenny reported that in the past six months, recycling rates using orange bags were at 19%, compared to 10% when the green boxes were in use.

Jenny informed the meeting that the service had been focussing on flats, and that Castle Ward was now complete. She asked that residents contact the service if any flats were not covered, for example, houses that had been converted into flats. Residents were informed that small blocks of flats would use orange bags, or communal orange bins for larger blocks of flats. Jenny reported that the next stage would be to target areas to encourage recycling, to educate and work with communities.

Residents were informed that the waste was bulked onto larger lorries and sent to a facility for separating into different grades. Any contaminated waste was used as fuel and converted into energy. Jenny stated that as much waste as possible was retained in the UK, though some was sent to China and India.

Residents asked why small dustbins were not used instead of the bags which could rip and tear. They also stated that some people did not put the right waste into the bags. Jenny stated that there was an issue of lack of space for some people to accommodate an additional bin, and that bins would not be collected, and orange bags would still need to be taken out.

Residents asked if the 19% recycling rate included waste from the ball mill. Jenny reported that waste from the ball mill was additional at around 40%. Residents were also informed that the County diverted around 60% of its waste from landfill, with the City at around 70%. Jenny also informed the meeting that there were approximately 60 recycling banks around the city where people could place shoes, clothes, etc., and the recycling centres could be used to take old car batteries, household items, etc.

Councillor Kitterick commented that since using the orange bags, his bin was no longer full, and could larger bins be replaced with smaller ones. Jenny stated there was an issue with funding that would not allow a blanket replacement of bins, but if anyone had a broken bin, or access issues, then they could be replaced. She also stated that people had a decorated bin, the stickers would not be replaced.

The Chair thanked the officers for the update.

## **53. FESTIVALS AND EVENTS CONSULTATION**

Mike Candler, Cultural Quarter Project Director, was present to discuss the Festivals and Events Consultation, which would conclude on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012, at 6.00pm.

Mike reported that the Council were undertaking a review of all services provided by the Voluntary and Community sectors and/or grant aided/funded through the Council, to establish the extent to which the festivals and events delivered the city's priorities and offered best value for money, how they contributed to culture and tourism, and brought communities together. The scope of the review was all festivals and events funded by the Council over £5,000. Mike reported that the consultation survey was available online, B Block Customer Services at New Walk Centre, in the Central Lending Library, and copies were brought to the meeting. Mike stated that where a particular festival or event was provided in a specific geographical location, Officers were consulting with the Ward, hence Castle Ward was being consulted on the proposal to cease to fund and organise several events which were held in the Ward, reported as follows:

- £18.5K - Daves Leicester Comedy Festival – the proposal was to maintain event with a three-year funding agreement, to allow the festival to plan longer-term.
- £9K - Spark Children's Arts Festival – the proposal was to maintain event with a three-year funding agreement, to allow the festival to plan longer-term.
- £30K - Belgrave Mela – the proposal was to maintain the funding. Retailers reported a 63% increase in till receipts on the day.
- £5K - Leicester International Music Festival – the proposal was to maintain funding with a one-year funding agreement. The festival attracted weekend visitors to the city.
- £10.3K - St George's Day – the proposal was to maintain the funding, but tender out the delivery of the event, effective from April 2013.
- £100K - Leicester Caribbean Carnival – a support model was adopted in 2011, and there would be no city centre parade. Support would be £100K (2012), 80K (2013), 60K (2014).
- £11K - Castle Park Festival – the funding was 72% of the total cost. The proposal was to cease funding, but seek a new two-day festival in the Arts around the area.

Residents asked if there was anything possible that could be done so that different communities' events could overlap and be more inclusive. Mike stated that he was picking up the same message from the consultation feedback. He reported that there were festivals that were inclusive, and that the new Heritage and Arts Festival was intended for all to celebrate the city's heritage. A resident stated that the International Music Festival was not representative of the international structure of city residents, though it was a gem of chamber music.

Residents then discussed issues that arose when festivals were taking place in particular areas, such as litter and noise. One example was the increased number of vehicles that appeared, for example, in Clarendon Park when events took place on Victoria Park. Residents reported having garage entrances blocked, and being unable to park near to their homes. The Chair suggested that there needed to be better co-ordination between Vinci Parking and the Police when events took place and would take the point back to officers, though he believed that Victoria Park was one of the most suitable venues in the city due to its locality and public transport links. It was agreed that festivals organisers should take into account the impact on an area where they were based.

A resident asked if costs per head varied for each event, what other factors were taken into consideration when deciding on funding. Mike reported that, amongst other things, cultural value, the impact on social cohesion and strategic priorities were taken into consideration, though there were different values for different events.

Mike stated that a decision would not be made on any of the funding until after the consultation period, and he urged people to go online or write to him, and put their comments in writing. He informed the meeting that he had noted the comments made and would raise the issues with colleagues.

#### **54. STUDENT SPD CONSULTATION OUTCOME**

The Chair informed the meeting that the SPD was now finalised and used to supplement Council policy. Councillor Clayton and Councillor Senior stated they would leave the meeting if specific planning issues were raised for which they would declare an interest and not take part in the discussions.

Mike Richardson and Ian Jordan, Planning, Transportation and Economic Development, presented the Student SPD, which was adopted by the City Council in June 2012, which supported planning policy guidance, and was available for viewing on the City Council's website. The document was developed following concerns from residents on the high concentration of students in certain areas, and a consultation exercise that was undertaken.

Mike informed the meeting that there were concerns from the developer community that there was a need for student accommodation, but that each planning application would be looked at alongside the criteria outlined in the document. The meeting was also informed that the Council was proposing to introduce an Article 4 Direction, which means that planning permission would also need to be obtained for change of use from a house to shared housing. At present, change of use could be made for up to six unrelated people without the need for planning permission. The City Council was proposing to implement an Article 4 Direction later in the year in Castle, Westcotes, Freeman and Stoneygate Wards, where there was a concentration of shared housing, though houses that were currently shared would not be affected.

Residents stated that living in an area with a high concentration of students caused problems for residents, and that they commended Leicester City Council for bringing in the document.

Councillor Clayton left the meeting at this point as a property was then discussed in Clarendon Park in which he had a personal prejudicial interest. Residents stated that the property was the first test of the new policy but that development was going ahead. Residents also made the following points:

- Figures at the Universities had shown a decline in student applications because of increased fees.
- Student accommodation when changed to flats would make very small living accommodation.

- There would be a demographic imbalance with lots of young people in one area, i.e. 30% of households in the ward were student accommodation.
- There should be contracts for landlords to take responsibility of students accommodation when occupied and due to the mess left behind when students vacated the premises.

The Chair stated that part of the criteria for new development would be evidence of unacceptable cumulative impact, which would require a more specific breakdown on where the major concentrates of students were. Also demand would have to be evidence by developers to show need for student accommodation.

Mike informed the meeting that purpose built accommodation required a management plan, but the Planning Department would only know it was not meeting conditions if people complained, in the first instance to Planning or the Noise Team, and that residents should not assume that if there was a breach, that Planning would be aware of the issue. Residents were told that the Magistrates Court could fine landlords, and sometimes cases would go to Crown Court.

Residents asked how landlords would be informed of the need for planning permission in the future to convert houses into shared accommodation. Residents also asked that if the onus was on landlords, were there compliance orders in place. The Chair informed the meeting that there were powers to licence accommodation that came under Licensing Control, and that an officer from Licensing at the City Council would be invited to a future meeting to discuss issues, such as licensing accommodation.

The Chair thanked Officers for the update.

## **55. POLICING UPDATE**

Inspector Chris Cockerill gave an update on Policing issues and answered questions from residents, highlighting the following points:-

- Crime statistics in the ward on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012 were down 18.1% on 2011 figures, the lowest recorded in the Castle Ward in three years.
- There had been increases in burglary other than dwellings, namely shed and shop break-ins, and an increase in theft from shops, which mirrored a nationally increased trend.
- Anti-social behaviour had been at its lowest in years.
- A begging operation had been launched.

Inspector Cockerill reported changes at Mansfield House LPU, which had seen an increase in 18 Officers from the Investigation Unit, though they had brought separate workloads with them. Residents stated that they had heard though the media that there would be cuts and a reduction of officers on the beat. Inspector Cockerill reported that £20 million savings had to be made in Leicester, but that the Chief Constable would not be reducing officer numbers, though some Officers would be lost due to assisting with the Olympics, which had been planned some time before.

A resident reported that garage pillars at St Leonards Court flats had been vandalised twice, and asked if anyone had been apprehended. The Chair stated Councillors would take the issue back to the local Housing Office.

Residents asked that thanks to the police should be recorded. Ward Councillors acknowledged the Police update and were pleased that figures for reported crime had gone down. The Police were thanked for all of their hard work.

## **56. CITY WARDENS UPDATE**

Nik Krneta introduced Chris Bramley-Brown as the City Warden who had joined Nik in Castle Ward. An update on issues dealt with in Castle Ward was provided and questions from residents were answered:

- Between January and July 2012, 650 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) had been issued.
- Littering now resulted in an £80 FPN.
- A zero tolerance policy was operated.
- Bins left on streets also resulted in an £80FPN, 32 of which had been issued, though there was usually intervention before a fine was issued. There would be a new process for dealing with bins in the next academic year, and flyers would be used to inform residents.

In response to a statement from residents reporting litter around Queen Elizabeth College, Chris stated that City Wardens had recently established a working relationship with the college, and two events were to be held in September education students. Nik also reported that when fines were issued to students, they would also phone the college, and they would bar the swipe card that students used to enter the college. Attention would also be given to areas around Regent College and the Universities.

A resident asked what percentage of fines were paid, and Nik would provide this information for a future meeting.

The City Wardens were thanked for the update.

## **57. BUDGET**

The Chair informed the meeting that the opening balance for the Community Meeting budget was £18,000, and introduced the following budget applications:

### **Application 1 – Clarendon Park Traders Association / Leicester City Council Festivals and Events – Funding towards commencement of arrangements of fair and craft market**

The application was for £1,500, (£500 of which had already been approved under the fast-track process). The funding would go towards the costs of road closures and

the hire of stall units, which would be run by the local community, local shops and business, as well as church groups, schools and other such parties.

RECOMMENDED:

that the application be supported and the remaining £1,000 be allocated.

### **Application 2 – Clarendon Park Traders Association – Clarendon Park Christmas Arts and Crafts Fair**

The application was for £2,000 towards the event, which had in the past been a great success and brought communities together. In response to a residents query, the meeting was informed that the application did not include putting up Christmas trees, but went mainly towards the road closure. It was recommended that support be sought from the local businesses for trees and lights.

RECOMMENDED:

that the application be supported and £2,000 be allocated.

Councillors reported that the budget balance after agreeing the support of the two applications above was £14,500. The Chair also reported that there remained £1,561 from the budget for 2011-12 allocated for Jubilee projects, and that anyone wishing to should submit an application to the Democratic Support Team at the Council.

### **Matters Approved Under the Fast Track Procedure**

The following budget request was included on the agenda for formally noting as it had been agreed by Councillors in between meetings to enable the project to take place.

Queens Road Fair and Craft Market – £500.

RESOLVED:

that the previously agreed funding be noted.

### **58. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- (i) A resident asked if the Council were considering using porous pavement materials. The Chair reported that the question would be taken back to officers and reported at the next meeting.
- (ii) A resident reported that there were no longer quiet areas in libraries. The Chair as for an agenda item on libraries at a future meeting.
- (iii) A resident asked if the results of the Health Consultation could also be discussed, and it was agreed that this would also be an agenda item at a future meeting.

### **59. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**



The next meeting is scheduled to take place on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012, 6.00pm

**60. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.18pm.