

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Wednesday, 5 December 2012

**Held at: Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, Armadale Drive,
Leicester**

Who was there:

Councillor Rita Patel
Councillor Barbara Potter
Councillor Gurinder Singh Sandhu

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 Talk to your local councillors or raise general queries	Police Issues Talk to your Local Police about issues or raise general queries.
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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.

12. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Potter was elected Chair for the meeting.

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from John Burrows.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Potter disclosed an Other Disclosable Interest as a City Council tenant.

15. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the Minutes of the Humberstone and Hamilton Community Meeting held on 28th September 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

16. CHANGES IN THE PROVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES

Linda Holmes, Operations Manager (Youth Services) attended the meeting and stated that Youth Services were in the process of change across the country and that Central Government were not universally backing Youth Services.

Just a few years previously Youth Services had been a statutory function of local authorities with numerous specifications in place for the provision of a range of services. Now the provision of services for youths was, in many areas, down to volunteers.

Leicester City Council has endeavoured to maintain a Youth Service (City Mayor's Pledge No. 65) and has established a 'Gold Standard' Youth Service, launched in November 2012 at the 'Y' Theatre, and this covered all youth services delivered in Leicester, not just those provided by the City Council. Following this launch the City Council would be working more closely in partnership with the voluntary sector.

Linda stated that the City Council were now looking to develop a 'Kite Mark' for youth services across the City and a Delivery Group to oversee this process would be set up, 50% of the membership to be young people.

Linda outlined the youth activities provided locally at both the Armadale and Raven Centres.

The Chair stated that she had recently met with Councillor Dempster (Assistant City Mayor – Children, Young People and Schools) and expressed concerns that, despite the recent £107,000 investment at the Armadale Centre, the facility remained un-

open for too long each week. Early in 2013 a Pilot Scheme was due to commence to get the Armadale Centre opened for longer hours each week with the aim of getting more youths off the street by providing more sessions that they were able to access. Street Vibe were assisting this process. In addition some outdoor gym equipment was being brought over from Armadale to the Netherhall Centre.

Linda stated that the City Council were looking to make better use of their buildings and keep them open longer by introducing more innovative working with various partners, following the completion of a needs analysis.

Councillor Patel stated that youth work was not just about providing organised activities. In Netherhall there was an established community, whereas in Hamilton there was a new community and this had led to certain tensions as a large number of residents in Netherhall were on the bread line. Thanks to the unstinting work of the Ward Councillor Netherhall had fared reasonably well over the past few years.

Linda stated that she understood that there was a need to look at the needs of communities and that when the needs analysis was undertaken in 2013 Hamilton would be looked at. In concluding Linda stated that when the Delivery Group was set up to oversee the delivery of changes identified there would be a need to ensure that representation on the Group was from across the spectrum of Youth Services.

The Chair requested that an update report be brought back to the Community Meeting in February 2013.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

17. WELFARE ADVICE AND INFORMATION

Jane Gallagher, representing Revenues and Benefits at the City Council attended the meeting and outlined the changes to Welfare Benefits that were coming into force during 2013 as a result of legislation set out within the Welfare Reform Bill. The changes outlined below were being implemented by the Government and the City Council would offer support within the savings imposed.

Jane stated that, from April 2013 four major changes were to be implemented, as follows:

Council Tax Benefits

Scheme was being drawn up by the City Council but had not yet been finalised.

Jane stated that anyone currently in receipt of Council Tax Benefit the changes would automatically roll over as this benefit would cease. Only Working Age people would be affected by the changes, not pensioners. Everyone would have to pay at least 20% towards their Council Tax Bill, although those with exceptional hardship would fall within the discretionary scheme yet to be finalised.

Social Rented Sector

Jane stated that the Government had set criteria whereby working age people in receipt of benefits would have the number of bedrooms set in relation to the size of their family. If it was deemed that a family was under-occupying a house, for example:

Family of husband and wife and 1 boy and 1 girl living in 4 bedroomed house (1 bedroom per husband/wife, 1 bedroom for boy (over 10yrs under 16yrs), 1 bedroom for girl (over 10yrs under 16yrs) = 3 bedrooms)
then an extra charge of 14% would be made for the 1 extra bedroom (25% extra charge for 2 extra bedrooms).

Note:

Children under 10 would be expected to share a room irrespective of age, whilst children under 16 would be expected to share respective of gender.

Local Housing Allowance – frozen for one year, this was based on rents charged within the area.

Amount of Benefit – amount of benefits going into a household would be capped at £500 for families and £300 for single persons. Families with three or more children would be affected by the changes and have their benefits reduced.

Crisis Loans – no longer to be handled by Department for Work and Pensions but instead by the Leicester City Council, amounts granted to be capped.

It was stated that the City Housing Department had been doing a lot of work on these changes and letters had been sent to those tenants that would be affected. Some tenants would be affected by one or more of the changes. Housing Department were in the process of changing the Allocations Policy to take account of the Welfare Benefit changes.

Jane stated that a lot of the changes already in place would fall into line with Universal Credit. Housing Benefit would now fall under the Universal Credit system and form one monthly lump-sum payment, this would also include Council Tax and Carers Grant (where applicable). This payment would be made direct to a member of the household and not to landlords as previously. The Government had made it clear that they want people to be responsible for their own households.

When Universal Credit was fully implemented by October 2017 Housing Benefit would no longer be implemented by the Council but by the Department of Work and Pensions.

The Chair stated that, in her opinion, levels of publicity to local parents had been minimal. Every household in the area would be affected by some or all of the changes outlined but those with mental health problems would likely cause the greatest concerns. New applicants for benefits, excluding Housing Benefits, currently faced 36 week delay and then would be subjected to means testing.

Safeguarding Children with Care Orders were not affected by the proposals, but as soon as the Care Order had finished they would be. Under 25's would not be able to claim Housing Benefit for single occupancy. Single Parents, for example, would be

hit particularly badly on Netherhall estate. Being given one lump sum to pay all of their bills was not fair, they would not be able to cope and support would need to be given. More information on the various changes was required in the Humberstone/Hamilton/Netherhall areas.

Councillor Patel stated that she had also got concerns that too few people in the City were aware of the comprehensive changes that were about to come into force.

Jane informed the meeting that a Forum was being held in the Adult Education College, Wellington Street, Leicester in February, involving Support for Tenants And Residents (STAR) and Energy Advice. Publicity for this Forum was still being finalised and Council Tenants, Young People and Single People were to be targeted.

Jane stated that any suggestions on how best information could best be got out to tenants would be welcomed.

An initial suggestion was to stage Advice Surgeries in Hamilton in the Sure Start Centres for example. Further suggestions were around putting large size posters on notice boards and in schools and Leisure Centres. A member of the public suggested Radio Leicester be used but was informed that previous attempts to publicise the Welfare Benefits changes on Radio Leicester had been turned down on the basis that the topic was 'too political'.

In summing up Councillor Patel stated that the City Council were trying to make the best out of a bad situation. The reality was that pressure was coming from all sides, the Budget Cuts started the pressures and now these comprehensive changes were set to make the situation worse but unlike previous occasions there was now no cushion available to soften the blow.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

18. LOCAL HOUSING ISSUES

Chrissie Field-Toon and Andy East attended the meeting and gave a brief update on Housing issues in the area.

Andy made reference to the Environmental Community Improvements Budget, an annual budget targeted at improving areas of local Housing owned land for the benefit of Council tenants. The fund came from sales etc. and from tenants.

During 2011/12 the budget had funded the provision of a footpath across the green space near to the shops on Netherhall Road, provided several laybys and improved lighting at the rear of shops. In 2012/13 the fund was being spent on some outdoor gym equipment on the park across from Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, Parks Department would be installing the equipment that was intended for use for both younger and older people in the area.

Andy stated that a further project was to seal and paint the canopy above the entrances to the shops on Netherhall Road, also owned by the City Council.

Regarding completed schemes, the internal areas of Council properties on Onslow Drive and nearby had been undertaken and metal gates had replaced wooden gates to the occupied shops on Netherhall Road.

Officers were now in the process of thinking of areas of spend from the budget for 2013/14 and would be liaising with Ward Councillors. Possible projects were the provision of further laybys on several streets and the possible cleaning/replacement of CCTV cameras near to the shops on Netherhall Road.

The Chair stated that Ward Councillors would meet with officers to discuss various proposals.

RESOLVED:
that the information be noted.

19. LOCAL POLICING ISSUES AND UPDATES

Inspector Ed McBryde-Wilding and Pc. Katie Burnham attended the meeting to give a brief update on local policing issues.

Katie stated that there had been a number of ASB issues in the vicinity of the Netherhall Road shops and around the Youth Club and these incidents had been made a local policing priority. Since then local consultation had been carried out and the situation had improved but the public were urged to pass any information to the local Police.

Katie stated that the Hamilton area had been relatively quiet with a few youths about on the streets, any reports of incidents would be welcomed.

Insp. M Bryde-Wilding stated that early on the previous day 5 houses in the area had been targeted as part of a wider East Midlands drugs operation.

The meeting was informed that Sir Clive Loader had recently been elected to the position of police Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire to give the Police more credibility. He would be determining the approach to policing in Leicester. The Police were part funded by Council Tax and Government funding and any input from the public was welcomed. Sir Clive Loader's office could be contacted on local policing issues (0116 2298980).

RESOLVED:
that the information be noted.

20. CITY WARDEN

Charlotte Glover, City warden attended the meeting and gave the following update:

Community Work

Charlotte stated that she had worked with the Police regarding littering issues along the footpath on Hamilton Way. A Clean-Up event had also taken place on Hamilton Way and 8 bags of rubbish had been collected.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Charlotte had issued 14 Fixed Penalty Notices since the last Community Meeting.

Promotion and Education Work

Charlottes stated that she had been educating shop keepers on their Duty of care and Section 93's. Charlotte had also been working with Biffa Leicester and Waste Management on issues around orange bags.

Early in 2013 Charlotte stated that she would be visiting Gateway College to educate students on their environmental responsibilities.

Services Requests

Charlotte reported that all service requests received had been responded to within the allocated time. Several of these requests were still on-going.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

21. BUDGET

Anita Patel, Scrutiny Support Officer presented the Community Meeting Budget and reported that the following applications had been received since the last meeting and the decisions are summarised: -

Application Deferred at the Last Meeting

- i) **30th Anniversary Celebration Event** **£1,696**
Northfields Playbarn

Application presented at the last meeting requesting funding for a 30th Anniversary event. Applicant not present at that meeting

The applicant was not present at the meeting, although a Committee member was, and the 30th Anniversary had now passed and could not be funded retrospectively.

Resolved:

that the applicant be advised that the application cannot be supported as the event to be funded has already taken place. The applicant to be advised that they are still able to re-apply for another purpose.

- ii) **Senior Citizens Group – Christmas Meal** **£661.80**
Twilight Group
Application submitted to fund a Christmas Meal for members of the Twilight Group.

Resolved:

that the application be **supported** in full - **£661.80**.

Late Applications received after the Agenda was prepared

- iii) **40th Anniversary Celebration Event** **£500**
East Leicester Dance Group **(from each Ward)**
Application received to part fund a 40th Anniversary event in 2013. Funding was also being sought from Thurncourt Ward.

Resolved:

that the application be **supported** in full - **£500**.

- iv) **West Humberstone Allotment Society** **£124.39**
and Carpe Road Allotments Orchard **(from each Ward)**
Application received from Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire to fund the purchase of fruit trees to create a small orchard.
Funding was also being sought from Charnwood Ward.

Resolved:

that the application be **supported** in full - **£124.39**.

- v) **LE5 Boxercise – Fitness for ALL** **£3,500**
The Forgotten Estate Community Association
Application received to fund series of Fitness for All sessions in the Ward at a venue yet to be finalised.

Following discussion it was stated that a consultation exercise was currently underway for residents of Netherhall and thurncourt regarding the future use of the Scout Hut at Thurncourt and the Raven Centre at Netherhall. Until the results of this consultation were known then no decision on the application would be made. The applicants were advised to secure a base to work from and then apply to other Community Meetings and Big Lottery etc.

It was agreed to bring the proposals back to the next meeting, and the Community Meeting was of the opinion that the proposal was a good idea.

Resolved:

That the application be **deferred** to the next meeting.

22. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) Issues Forwarded to the meeting by John Burrows

Police Neighbourhood Link

Mr Burrows wish to say that the Police Neighbourhood Link was a first class and fast service that enable the local community to be kept informed.

Police and Crime Commissioner

Mr Burrows questioned when the Humberstone and Hamilton community were likely to meet Sir Clive Loader, the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner, at the Community Meeting.

It was agreed that a Special Meeting would be arranged for Sir Clive Loader to attend.

20mph Speed Limit, Main Street Humberstone

Mr Burrows questioned when the relevant signage would be erected in Main Street Humberstone.

The Chair stated that this proposal had been looked at and it had been felt that there was no need for a 20mph zone on this road.

23. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.45pm.

