

# **Your Community, Your Voice**

## **Record of Meeting and Actions**

**6:00 pm, Tuesday, 9 July 2013**

**Held at: Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, Armadale Drive,  
Leicester. LE5 1HF**

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.

<b>Ward Councillors and General Information</b>  Talk to your local councillors or raise general queries	<b>Police Issues</b>  Talk to your Local Police about issues or raise general queries.
<b>Welfare Benefits</b>  Receive information on welfare Benefit changes	<b>City Warden</b>  Talk to your local City Warden

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.

### **35. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Potter was elected Chair for the meeting.

### **36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Mr Burrows (Resident) and Chrissie Field (Area Housing).

### **37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this time.

### **38. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Humberstone and Hamilton Community Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013 be agreed as a correct record.

### **39. WELFARE BENEFIT CHANGES**

Darren Moore, Team Manager (Advice Services), attended the meeting and gave an overview of changes to welfare benefits and also circulated copies of 'A Guide to the Welfare Reform Changes'.

Darren informed those present that the changes outlined would affect all working age persons' currently in receipt of benefits and stated that, apart from the much publicised 'Bedroom Tax' and Council Tax changes a 'Benefit Cap' was to be introduced in September 2013 that would affect local people in this area by imposing a cap on benefits earnings. The current estimate of the cap was £350 for single claimants and £500 for lone parents and couples. Further cuts to benefits were also in the pipeline.

Darren stated that there was, at present, a backlog of some 4,000 Appeals into the notified reduction/refusal of benefits, this represented a 1 year wait for claimants and was because of the cutback in funding received for Advice Services in the City.

A transition period, to move all benefit claimants onto Universal Credit, the new means tested benefit that would replace the current system of working age benefits and tax credits, by replacing them with one benefit, would run until 2017. Universal Credit would be paid monthly, although there would be certain exceptions, and there would be a discretionary approach to applying the credit. Those wishing to have Universal Credit paid weekly would have to apply direct to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The Chair stated that some 792 households in the immediate area had been identified as being 'in difficulty' as a direct result of the changes outlined, some of the families concerned were struggling to find enough money to eat. The news reported at the meeting was not good for anyone currently in receipt of benefits. In the meantime work was underway, with Community Meeting funding, to facilitate the implementation of a soup kitchen at Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, and maybe introduce food parcels.

Members of the public present were urged to make their views of the Welfare Benefits changes known and it was stressed that it had been the Government that had introduced the changes outlined and that it was the respective Council's across the country that were having to administer them.

Darren stated that a booklet, mapping out where help was available to benefits claimants was currently in the final stages of publication and would be made available at numerous City Council venues, including Community Centres and Libraries.

The Chair stated that the relevant forms to apply for the new benefits were extremely complicated, although the DwP had claimed that it would be simple to apply online, taking no account of those who did not have access to a computer, or even the necessary skills to complete an application online.

In concluding Darren stated that the Government had stated that some 80% of people across the country were in favour of cuts to benefits, and the changes were being driven by this demand.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

#### **40. YOUNG PEOPLES' SERVICES**

Carl, Raki and Raoul, representing the Young Peoples' Council (YPC) attended the meeting and reported that the local hub for Young Peoples' Services was at the Armadale Centre.

Active campaigning was currently underway to try and get Life Skills onto School Curriculums and representatives of the YPC would be visiting schools and colleges to outline this.

A further campaign was that of trying to get the younger and the older generations to mix.

Young Peoples' Surgeries were to be held in the Armadale Centre and a representative of the YPC would be frequently attending future meetings of the Community Meeting.

A member of the public stated that he wanted to gain a better understanding of the work undertaken at the hub at the Armadale Centre. The Centre had been recently

been refurbished, with new kitchen, dance studio, fitness suite etc. but had never been fully utilised since this refurbishment

Raki stated that there had been a lot of staff changes, and that a programme of activities for young people had been planned and would be in place in time for the start of the school holidays.

The Chair stated that she did not want to see the Armadale Centre as just a base for staff, but rather operating facilities for young people. Raki confirmed that these activities were now just coming on stream and would be publicised across the Ward.

In conclusion the Chair stated the Community meeting would welcome a regular update at each meeting from young peoples' representatives on the work at the hub, and an indication of the catchment area of the users of the facilities at the Armadale Centre.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

#### **41. FEEDBACK FROM PATCH WALK**

Charlotte, City Warden, outlined the scope of the patch walk that had taken place in May. The walk had covered roads, fly-tipping, Tesco's, playground at Kestrel Lane and other playgrounds.

The play area at Heybridge Road had also been looked at and this was another area that was not owned by the City Council. Attempts to contact the owners of the site were being made.

It was stated that the playground at Kestrel Lane was in disrepair and was not owned by the City Council. The company owning the site had been tracked down and they claimed that they were working on behalf of residents, although no firm contacts could be made.

Planning/Highways at the City Council were looking to construct road humps on estates in a different way, thus making them less slippery and dangerous in winter.

It was stated that new facilities were available at Danbury Gardens, including a hairdresser and a café. In addition a room was available for hire.

It was stated that an alleyway running between Humberstone Drive and the Towers site was being frequently used as a shortcut. Highways had been contacted and they were looking to provide a bollard to prevent such further use.

The Chair stated that she would like to invite Traffic and Transport officers to the next Community Meeting on 23 October 2013 and that a further Patch Walk would be arranged.

Note:

At this point Councillor Sandhu disclosed an Other Disclosable Interest as a member of the City Council Planning and Development Control Committee and took no part in the discussion on the following issue.

Councillor Patel made reference to the long-standing dissatisfaction expressed by residents of Hamilton to the lack of investment in the infrastructure on the estate, roads, shops, schools etc. Problems would shortly be getting worse due to the impending developments of some 1200 new houses in the immediate area, existing services would not be able to cope. The officers negotiating Section 106 contributions from developers should be listening to local people as it was strongly felt that such contributions from nearby developments should be spent in this local area.

The Chair reported that there were issues around Humberstone Junior School and the fact that it was to become an Academy in the Autumn. It was stated that the City Council had no control over this decision of the Governors of the school, but the move to Academy status could affect local children as the admission process could well be revised.

A member of the public stated that there seemed to be a lack of football provision locally and more sports facilities were required. The Chair stated that there were a number of sports clubs based locally but the important issue was to utilise fully the existing facilities available locally and ensure that they were retained, rather than push for additional facilities at this stage.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted and that officers from Traffic and Transport be invited to attend the next meeting to address local concerns.

## **42. CITY WARDEN**

Charlotte reported that City Wardens had now got additional powers that covered skips, scaffolding, building materials on the public highway. Further powers were expected later in the year.

Charlotte stated that, since the last meeting, a large number of streets on Hamilton estate had now been adopted by the City Council and would therefore be maintained by the Council.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

## **43. LOCAL POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Sgt. Wayne Nimblette attended the meeting to provide an update on local policing and community safety issues.

Since the last meeting there had been a 36% increase in crime across the City. Locally there had been 1 less burglary during this period, compared to the same period in 2012, and an increase in thefts.

At the last meeting it had been reported that there had been an increase in ASB incidents in the Netherhall Road area. Recently 1 youth had been arrested and was now in prison and the problems had reduced drastically.

The Chair stated that there had been a lot of problems in the area of the shops on Netherhall Road, including robberies and violence, and these had effects on local residents. The Chair questioned why the levels of crime had risen in this area especially as the Council had invested in extra security and CCTV. Sgt. Nimblette reported that, following the recent robbery at the supermarket on Netherhall Road a number of people had been arrested within 12 hours of the incident taking place. Regarding the assaults at the shop, someone had since been apprehended and interviewed and the victim had been informed.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

#### **44. LOCAL HOUSING ISSUES**

Andy East, Estate Management and Tenancy Support attended the meeting to provide an update on Housing related issues.

##### Environmental Projects

Andy reported that the previously reported outdoor Gym area on Humberstone Park was now up and running.

A couple of parking schemes were currently underway in the Ivychurch Crescent area to provide lay-bys to complement those previously constructed.

Some painting work was due to be carried out to the communal areas of flats on the estate.

Andy reported that the CCTV outside the shops on Netherhall Road had become old and had subsequently been upgraded and had been linked to Blackbird Road control room. It had then been ascertained that the telephone line connecting the CCTV to Blackbird Road had been faulty and the recording equipment had been located to one of the shop units, and since moved again. The recording equipment now needed to be moved yet again and consolidated to an area that Housing Department could control, as well as meeting necessary regulations, this work, including work to the CCTV installation, was estimated to cost £14k.

Members expressed the view that they were not prepared to see £14k spent on the CCTV camera as outlined but rather look at the issue in its wider context and assessing whether there was any other way of achieving the required CCTV coverage at less cost and to look at the other cameras located close by. A meeting to discuss these issues would be arranged as soon as possible.

Regarding the 2013/14 Environmental Projects suggestions were being sought. To date it had been suggested that additional parking bays in Ivychurch Crescent were a possibility. The Chair stated that since earlier works in the area accidents had been reduced and suggested that another area of the estate be targeted. Suggestions were welcomed to be forwarded to Andy.

It was further reported that Netherhall Gardens had recently been tidied with the planting of shrubs and bulbs and now help was required to help provide ongoing maintenance of the site. It was suggested that this request for help be advertised across the estate and that approaches be made to the Allotment Society and the Scouts for possible support.

#### Fire Inspections

Andy reported that Housing were taking a zero tolerance approach to items deposited in communal areas of flats across the City. Fire Authority officers would be undertaking inspections and instructions would be sent to all relevant tenants. The Chair suggested that the relevant notices should be displayed in the appropriate communal areas and all tenants affected notified.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

## **45. BUDGET**

### **2012/13 Budget**

The Community Meeting was informed that, in respect of the 2012/13 Budget the following application had been considered at the last meeting: -

<b><u>Educational Awareness Evening - Somali Community in Leicester</u></b>	<b>£1429.30</b>
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The Community Meeting was reminded that an application had been received from the Horn of Africa Services and Development Organisation (HASDO) to fund an educational awareness evening on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2013.

The decision at that meeting had been to **Defer** the application pending discussion with the Ward Councillors of the other Wards that had been approached by the organisation, but that in the meantime a maximum of **£1,000** was allocated subject to the outcome of the discussions.

It was reported that one Community Meeting had approved a partial amount and the application had been refused by two other Community Meetings. Officers had also received information from Children and Young Peoples Services to the effect that the the proposed event was being staged during the school holidays and that the applicant should be advised to liaise with their department.

RESOLVED:



That the application be **Refused** in view of the outcome of discussions held, and that the applicants be advised to liaise with the Children and Young Peoples Services department at the City Council.

### **2013/14 Budget**

The Community Meeting was informed that the opening Community Meeting Budget 2013/14 was £18,000.

The following budget applications were reported as having been received: -

- i) **Netherhall Diamonds U7's Football Club** **£500**  
Application received to purchase football equipment and kit to enable this team of under 7's to progress.

RESOLVED:

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

- ii) **Compassion in Action** **£720**  
Application received to fund, on 4 occasions over a 2 month period, help with gardening and general maintenance and garden clearance to help bridge the gap between the Christian community and those who do not attend church. It was also intended to offer a free open invite BBQ for Netherhall residents at the end of each 'Compassion in Action' day.

RESOLVED:

that the application be **supported - £720**.

### **46. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- i) **Democratic Support**  
The Chair announced that this would be the last Humberstone and Hamilton Community Meeting covered by Mike Keen, who would be retiring from the City Council at the end of October 2013. Members expressed their best wishes.

- ii) **Land at rear of Humberstone School**  
It was reported that an area of footpath at the rear of Humberstone School, and opposite the corner of Colin Grundy Drive was badly overgrown and an adjoining piece of land was the subject of a planning application.

In reply it was suggested that Charlotte, City Warden be asked to look at the overgrown path and it was stated that it was not known what the planning application on the adjacent area of land was for.

- iii) **20mph Zone – Main Street Humberstone**  
In response to a question from Mr. Burrows it was stated that officers had responded by stating that a 20mph scheme for Humberstone Village was part of the Council's current 20mph programme of schemes. The Humberstone Village scheme was currently being designed and consultations on the

preliminary design proposals had taken place with Ward Councillors and the emergency services. Full public consultation on the design proposals was being planned for early September, when children had returned to school, thus allowing parents and carers an opportunity to participate in the consultation, the City Mayor to be briefed in early August prior to the public consultation.

#### **47. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

