

Leicester
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED: Aylestone, Eyres Monsell,
Freemen**

**Economic Development & Planning Scrutiny
Committee**

8th February 2007

Leicester South Area Profile, Summary and Background Information

Report of the Service Director, Regeneration, Highways and Transportation

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Members are asked to note this Report for information only. At the Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freemen Area Committee meeting 11th April 2006 local residents raised their disappointment at the lack of funding available for Eyres Monsell and Aylestone. It was felt that they had missed out on having funds spent on their area in the past. The Chair of the Area Committee referred the matter to Cabinet on 15th May 2006. It was resolved that officers work with local residents and partners to bring forward a major regeneration project for the south of the city. Two areas of particular interest are the Riverside and some form of youth provision.
- 1.2 This report provides a general overview of the area and provides some key data and information as the basis for discussions between officers, members, and local residents regarding the form a suitable regeneration initiative should take.

2. Summary

The report provides a broad description of the area, its key features, transport links and open spaces. A brief assessment of current initiatives and the opportunities for regeneration funding is followed by an initial analysis of some strengths, opportunities and limitations for regeneration schemes in the area.

3. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

4. Headline Financial and Legal Implications

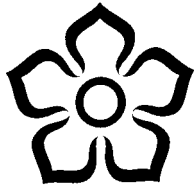
There are no significant financial implications associated with this report.

Head of Finance to confirm

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Head of Legal Services to confirm

- 5. Report Author/Officer to contact:**
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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Report

1.1 At the Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freemen Area Committee meeting 11th April 2006 local residents raised their disappointment at the lack of funding available for Eyres Monsell and Aylestone. It was felt that they had missed out on having funds spent on their area in the past. The Chair of the Area Committee referred the matter to Cabinet on 15th May 2006. It was resolved that officers work with local residents and partners to bring forward a major regeneration project for the south of the city. Two areas of particular interest are the Riverside and some form of youth provision.

1.3 Leicester South

Located to the South of the City, the area contains the Aylestone, Eyres Monsell, and Freemen wards

1.4 **Aylestone** has a mix of housing, some industry (near Saffron Way and Disraeli Street) and large pockets of open space much of which is on its Western side and includes Aylestone Meadows Nature Reserve, Riverside Park and Aylestone Playing Fields. The Grand Union Canal and Great Central Railway run adjacent to the ward boundary on the west.

1.5 **Eyres Monsell** is based on the southernmost tip of the city and is a mix of housing, although compared to the other two wards has a large percentage of local authority housing. There are some small open/public spaces mostly located on the outermost boundaries.

1.6 **Freemen** comprises two distinct and separate areas with Knighton Fields to the north and Saffron Lane Estate to the south. There is a mix of housing, a few open spaces and some industry (Oakland Road Industrial Estate, Freemans Common and the Gas works). Leisure facilities, including Aylestone Leisure Centre and Saffron Sports Stadium, which serve both the local area and the wider community are located here. Saffron Lane has a cluster of shops and fast food outlets that serve the local community.

1.7 Planning policies

Leicester City Council has recognised the importance of city centres as a focus for social and economic life in urban areas and is currently investing in major regeneration of the city centre including; developing a vibrant and innovative retail sector; developing a cultural quarter including the new performing arts centre. In addition there is a drive to maximize the use of public transport, rather than the car to ensure the provision of a safe and high quality environment. It is therefore important to ensure that areas outside the city centre are also high quality environments, connected to the city centre.

The Adopted City Of Leicester Local Plan 2006 includes policies for local and district shopping centres. The Planning Service is currently looking to prepare a core strategy for the city that will be used to update the Local Plan in due course. It is likely that that a key issue will be to strengthen local neighbourhoods as far as it is possible within the planning system.

1.8 Physical boundaries

Physical boundaries can create a visual edge to an area and contain it, but can also be seen as preventing growth and movement. Leicester South is spatially and visually contained by the railway line running directly to the East providing a clearly defined ward boundary, whilst the West of the area is clearly denoted by the waterside area, comprising the River Soar and the Grand Union Canal. Whilst this provides a clearly defined area of the city it is also important that it connects and links well to the city centre.

1.9 Transport

Leicester South has 3 major arterial roads cutting through the area and providing clearly defined ward boundaries. The area is prone to heavy traffic and congestion and could be perceived as a transport corridor, rather than a place of destination. Congestion, particularly at peak times, along Saffron Lane, Aylestone/Lutterworth Road and Glenhills Boulevard can potentially create noise and air pollution. The most recent Air Quality analysis results (2006) from the monitoring site at the junction of Glenhills Boulevard and Lutterworth Road shows 68 micrograms (per metre cubed) of nitrogen dioxide, which is in significantly in excess of the annual mean limit of 40. The predicted target for 2010 is 55 micrograms.

The area has good transport links and the close proximity of the motorway, (M1, M69), provides direct access to the area and onwards to the city centre. Good public transport serves the area with frequent bus services into and out of the city centre. Transport plans are underway to upgrade and refurbish the 'pork pie' roundabout, located at the junction of the three wards; this will improve traffic flow and should help to reduce congestion.

1.10 Parks, Open Spaces and Allotments

Although there are allotment sites in all three wards, the majority are located in the Freeman Ward with only a minimal site allocation in Eyres Monsell. Both major allotment sites in Freeman have had part of the site designated

as potential sites for housing development and this could provide opportunities for regeneration in the area.

There are a number of parks and open spaces in the area the majority fall under the ownership of the City Council. Apart from Aylestone Hall and gardens and to some extent Aylestone Recreation Ground, the remaining parks and playing fields are low maintenance and semi naturalised with limited facilities. Many of the play areas have basic equipment which cater for the up to 10 yr age range, however much of this is now outdated. There is an identified need for some form of youth provision in the area. Aylestone Park and recreation ground has provision for football and rugby as well as a hard surface multi purpose court. Football provision is also available at the following sites - Aylestone playing fields, Sturdee Road, Linwood Playing Fields and Kingfisher playing fields. Eyres Monsell has 3 areas of wooded land - Two Acre Spinney, Her Ladyships Covert and Grange Spinney.

The old allotment site abutting Soar Valley Way and the open space abutting Neston Gardens are currently derelict, but some minor work is being undertaken by LCC parks department. Both sites offer potential opportunities for regeneration/redevelopment. A number of the sports pavilions located in and around Aylestone Meadows have been vandalised and burnt down and are in need of refurbishment/redevelopment.

The Riverside Park could potentially be put forward in the future for a Green Flag Award.

1.11 Regeneration Funding

Eyres Monsell and Freeman fall within the government's definition of being amongst the top 10% most deprived areas in the country and between them contain four of the top 10% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas in the city. Aylestone is not affluent but because it does not suffer levels of deprivation akin to its neighbours, it does not attract large public funding.

In terms of educational attainment both the Freeman and Eyres Monsell wards rank within the 10% worst in the country. In primary schools levels of Special Education Need are disproportionately high compared to the rest of the city.

The Saffron Estate within the Freeman Ward has received funding under a number of regeneration programmes including Single Regeneration Budget 5 (SRB5); Sure Start, Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) and various European grant programmes.

Eyres Monsell and Freeman together formed Leicester South's Health Action and Education Action Zones both initiatives being phased out around 2001/02. All 3 wards formed part of the safer routes initiative area.

Eyres Monsell has received Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) for a number of projects and both Eyres Monsell and Freeman will continue to be eligible for NRF funding as both wards have areas that rank as among the

Index of Multiple Deprivation's most deprived 5% in the country. Aylestone does not qualify for NRF as it doesn't fall within this category.

1.12 Other funding and ongoing initiatives

City Academy - A new Academy, sponsored by Leicester Diocesan Board for Education (Church of England) and Samworth Brothers (Holdings) Ltd is planned to open in 2007. The Academy is located in the Eyres Monsell ward and will cater for pupils aged from 3-16 and will have Citizenship as its specialism.

Aylestone Meadows Local Nature Reserve and the Riverside - The Riverside Park is a twelve-mile long green corridor running through the city along the river Soar and the Grand Union Canal. It has picnic and nature areas, cycle paths and open spaces. The Urban Design Group is responsible for the maintenance and enhancement of Leicester's riverside and provides the Riverside Ranger service. The Riverside Project Officer manages the Riverside Capital Programme which comprises £351,000 of capital funding, allocated between 2005-2008 for improvements to Local Nature Reserves. The funding has been allocated to undertake improvements to footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths in Aylestone Meadows and work is currently ongoing.

The idea of a Riverside visitors centre in this area has been considered for some time, although there may be opportunities of obtaining capital funding to construct a centre, the ongoing running and maintenance costs would need to be considered and funding for this could be problematic. The possibility of obtaining a 'Green Flag' award for Riverside Park is currently being considered.

Future success and opportunities for the Riverside area would need the support and commitment of the Area Committee. There are real opportunities to promote the area, as it is the largest nature reserve in the city. It could be utilised as an educational resource for schools both in and outside the city. Similar schemes, which have had success sustaining a visitors centre, include –Brocks Hill Visitor Centre and Country Park in Oadby and the Attenborough Nature Reserve Chilwell, Nottingham, facilities available include exhibitions, educational programmes, cafés and meeting rooms. The lack of car parking provision for a visitors centre in Riverside could be problematic and would reduce opportunities to maximise revenue. There could also be problems with the city green belt if any development included commercial ventures ie; shop or café.

Traffic and Transport

Improvements to the 'Pork Pie' roundabout are scheduled to commence in the near future; this aims to alleviate traffic congestion and pollution.

1.13 Other possibilities

- In Aylestone a number of the industrial units around Disraeli Street are currently derelict and there could be potential for new development in the area.

- There are 3 areas identified as potential sites for housing development, these are St Mary's allotments and Heathcott Road allotments in Freeman and the old allotment gardens abutting the derelict site along Soar Valley Way in Aylestone.
- The green space along the southern tip of Eyres Monsell abuts the canal and facilities here could possibly be improved with better links to the county. Many of the open spaces would benefit from improved signage and maintenance works to footpaths and cycle ways.

1.14 Understanding The Area

Summary of Strengths	Summary of Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established Area Committee • Junction of Saffron Lane/Aylestone Road and the Walkers Stadium marks the gateway into town • Well located with good transport links to the city centre via Saffron Lane/Aylestone Road and links to motorway (M1 & M69) and other side of the city via Glenhills Boulevard • Good public transport into the city (bus) • Two of the cities major sports grounds – football (Walkers Stadium) and cricket (Grace Road) are located in the area, with the rugby ground nearby. • Availability of parks, open spaces, playing fields and allotment sites • Aylestone Hall and grounds – received green flag award 2006 • Leicester City Football club training ground – large area of open space • Riverside - Location of city's largest Local Nature Reserve • Saffron Sports Stadium • Local shopping facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic through route • Traffic congestion and pollution • Area can be congested and parking problematic – particularly during rugby/football/cricket matches • Limited retail and shopping areas • Lack of recreational facilities • Inadequate on-street parking • A number of disused and empty properties – Disraeli Street, Aylestone • Derelict open spaces – old allotment sites abutting Soar Valley Way, open space abutting Neston Gardens, Saffron Lane velodrome • Railway Lines are visual and physical barriers • Limited facilities on playing fields with little or no youth provision • Poor quality open spaces with outdated play equipment
Summary of Opportunities	Summary of Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with local residents • Potential funding for capital projects – Big Lottery Fund, English Nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No co-ordinated plan for development of area • Costly consultation process • Unsuccessful funding bids • Sustainability of any new development or

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions on through traffic not total ban • Provision of more shops and facilities • New housing – 3 potential sites identified • Renovation of derelict sites and open spaces • New public space could be created • Renovate/updgrade playing fields and facilities • More sporting facilities • More bus services and park and ride • Development of riverside area • Completion of new Academy • Promotion/development of Riverside nature reserve • Acquisition of Leicester City Football Club training grounds. • Potential green flag award for Riverside Park 	<p>enterprise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic and transport routes • Opposition to proposals from local residents/local authority • Flooding of Riverside Area • Concerns about crime and safety • Lack of co-operation from owners of run down properties • Lack of coordination with each ward operating independently of one another
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2. Conclusions

The Leicester South area has some potential for a regeneration scheme that could capitalise on the area's assets such as the nature reserve, derelict land ripe for regeneration, sporting connections, the new City Academy, and good transport links. A major drawback is the lack of available regeneration funding given the priority attached to the redevelopment of the City Centre, and areas of Leicester that face much higher levels of deprivation. This drastically reduces the sustainability of any capital proposals for the area.

Appendix 1

Demographics

Category	Aylestone	Eyres Monsell	Freemen
2001 Population All People	10,801	11,229	9,983
0-15	1,993 (18.45%)	2,872 (25.57%)	2,278 (22.81%)
16-19	482 (4.46%)	616 (5.48%)	607 (6.08%)
20-64	6,413 (59.37%)	5,656 (50.36%)	6,114 (61.24%)
65+	1,913 (17.71%)	2,085 (18.56%)	984 (9.85%)
Ethnicity			
White British	9,651	10,302	8,202
White Other	332	338	488
Mixed	149	213	307
Asian or Asian British	447	220	473
Black or Black British	161	116	332
Chinese or other ethnic group	61	40	181
All people aged 16-74	7,792	7,356	7,251
People aged 16-74 with no qualifications	2,747 (35.25%)	3,870 (52.61%)	2,660 (36.68%)
All people aged 16-74 in employment	5,254 (67.41%)	3,894 (52.93%)	3,756 (51.80%)
Number of People claiming income related benefits	975 (9.03%)	1,790 (15.94%)	1,610 (16.13%)
Job Seeker	190	340	360
Incapacity Benefit	450	685	670
Lone Parent	155	445	335
Carer	70	135	105
Disabled	65	110	75
Other	45	75	65
People aged 16-74 who usually travel to work by: Driving a Car/van	2,729 (51.94%)	1,809 (46.46%)	1,551 (41.30%)
All Households	4,764	4,668	3,950
Owner Occupied	74.37%	46.33%	42.13%
Rented from Council	10.62%	46.85%	34.51%
Rented from Housing Association	3.57%	1.39%	7.16%
Other	11.44	5.39%	16.20%
All lone parent households with dependent children	283 (5.94%)	657 (14.07%)	570 (14.43%)
Life expectancy at birth			
Female	79.43	79.53	79.07
Male	75.00	72.13	74.31
People with a limiting long term illness	2,064 (19.11%)	2,555 (22.75%)	1,857 (18.60%)
Teenage Conception Rate			

Source: Census Data 2001

More details on area demographics are available in the document Area Profile 6: Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freeman. Available at <http://www.leicester-regeneration.org.uk/lerp-home/demographics/area-profiles-electronic>

Appendix 2

Area Features

Ward	Aylestone	Eyres Monsell	Freemen
Key buildings and sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aylestone Hall and gardens • River Soar and Grand Union Canal – Aylestone Meadows and the Riverside area comprises the cities largest Local Nature Reserve (LNR). • Gas Works and museum • Grace Road Cricket Ground • The Raw Dykes Roman Aqueduct on Aylestone Road • Medieval Packhorse Bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saffron Hill Cemetery • The Exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkers Stadium • Saffron Sports Centre • Aylestone Leisure Centre • Aylestone Park/Recreation ground • Knighton Fields Centre Herrick Road
Community Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilmorton Community Rooms • Lansdowne Neighbourhood Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southfields 'Pork Pie' library • Eyres Monsell Community Education Project • Magpie Youth Centre • Rolleston Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aylestone Library • Linwood Centre • Kingfisher Youth Centre • Knighton Fields Community Centre
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granby Primary • Montrose Primary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyres Monsell Primary • Holy Cross Primary • Rolleston Primary • Southfields Infant School • Newry Junior School • <i>New City Academy</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knighton Fields Primary • Marriott Primary
LCC Parks, Recreation Grounds and Playing Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aylestone Hall and gardens • Riverside Park • Aylestone playing fields and sports grounds • Montrose Road play area • Gilmorton/Soar Valley Way play area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linwoods playing fields • Two Acre Spinney and Sturdy Road recreation ground • Grange Spinney and Ambleside Way playground Hillsborough Road recreation ground • Featherstone Drive open space and Woodbank open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aylestone Park/Recreation Ground • Kingfisher playing fields • Elston Fields Recreation Ground • Windley Road Recreation Ground