

Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freeman Area Committee

Eyres Monsell Community Centre: 12 December 2007

Note of meeting between police and council officers

In attendance:

David Budd: police and CSOs covering beats within the Aylestone, Eyres Monsell and Freeman wards

Jerry Connolly (members support officer) Leicester City Council

Objectives

- Identify areas of joint interest to present to future meetings of Area Committees and ward assemblies
- Highlight particular issues of concern from the police perspective.

Police beat and CS officers acknowledged the close co-operation between them and councillors and LCC staff. In particular police acknowledged the work being done with housing office staff at Eyres Monsell in combating antisocial behaviour.

Role of housing in combating ASB

Police recognised the co-operation with the local housing offices in dealing with ASB - especially the sanction that a tenant could lose his/her home because of a failure to moderate or address either their own behaviour or take responsibility for their children's actions.

It was noted, however, that this was helped enormously by the fact that there was a single major landlord involved. It would be a mistake to try to role out the strategy into other parts of the city where, for example, there were hundreds of landlords and where the same approach would simply not work.

County Cricket Ground

It was recognised that the streets around the ground posed a particular parking problem on big match days, notably 20:20 events, but that fixtures at other venues, including league soccer and rugby, also caused problems in the area.

For police a major issue around the cricket ground involved antisocial behaviour (asb), including graffiti, and the use of back alleyways to access and get away from points of graffiti and other antisocial behaviour. But one valuable resource was considered to be the learning centre at the cricket ground, which could be used as a centre for further activities (youth provision issue).

Aylestone leisure centre is also a focus for what is perceived to be asb, with youngsters from around the centre meeting up there. The main reason is that the centre is close to a number of schools which attract students from across the city. Under-age smoking and drinking as well as older people drinking provides an environment some people regard as intimidating.

There was concern not only that some retail outlets might be selling either directly to under-age customers, or knowingly selling drink to older people in the knowledge or suspicion that these drinks would be sold on to under-age drinkers. In at least one case drink had been sold from a private house.

One issue is that access to the centre is considered to cost too much for youngsters, who therefore concentrate on activities outside the centre instead.

Southfields Library ASB included graffiti and damage to windows: 84 were smashed in one night. The area was the subject of a micro-beat, with particular attention being paid to dealing with asb relating to Hallowe'en and Guy Fawkes events and associated behaviour. This included a safe fireworks buying initiative, making sure that fireworks were not sold to under-age customers.

Within the Eyres Monsell estate, there had been action taken against drug dealers and users, asb had been tackled with the help of the city's housing office.

At least ten letters had been written to tenants who were parents of children identified with asb and warning that they were likely to eviction unless behaviour improved a range of actions, including asbos, injunctions and evictions, were deployed.

Police thought that injunctions - including orders banning offenders from particular areas - were useful in applying greater pressure

While reluctant to ascribe the term gangs, police said there were two groups of youths active on the estate, mainly in their early teens, and one of which was mainly female. With the latter groups 14 letters have been sent to parents and 10 spoken to.

Here, as in other parts of the beat representation, there was strong concern about lack of youth provision. Better lighting and cctv would also help deal with asb and provide a greater sense of security.

Bus stops have been the subject of repeated vandalism. Police say that JC Decaux have vandal-proof replacement shelter glass, but are working through their existing stock of less resistant glass first. Jerry said he would check with the city council on this one.

Domestic violence is considered to be a very serious issue by the police: there were 330 reported incidents in the previous 365 days on the Saffron Lane estate: research suggested that one in four such incidents were reported. Indeed, almost a third of all domestic incidents in the division, which covered eight beats and six wards, took place on the Saffron Lane estate in the last year.

The Velodrome

The loss of recreational community facilities in the Velodrome redevelopment was a cause for concern. The community facilities provided by the redevelopment were “about the size of two small gardens”. (Lack of youth provision again).

Gilmorton v Eyres Monsell

There was concern that it would be much harder to roll a social compact with tenants, in the style of the Gilmorton tenants’ contact, onto the Eyres Monsell estate. Eyres Monsell was around 10 times the size of Gilmorton, and it was felt that on Gilmorton it was now not easy to keep residents actively involved on the local consultation mechanisms.

Jerry Connolly

2 November 2007