

Castle Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:30 pm, Tuesday, 22 July 2008

**Held at: The University of Leicester, Charles Wilson Building,
Belvoir City Lounge, University Road, Leicester**

Who was there:

Councillor Matt Follett

Councillor Phil Gordon

Councillor Patrick Kitterick

11. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Kitterick explained that the meeting would be chaired by all three of the Castle Councillors, with them taking it in turns to chair different parts of the agenda.

12. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Kitterick welcomed everyone to the second Castle Community Meeting, and introductions were given.

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the Leicester City Primary Care Trust.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interests they might have in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Act applied to them.

No such declarations were made at this time.

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Castle Community Meeting dated 22 April 2008 were circulated and members were asked to approve them as a correct record.

Minute Item 9 (Confirmation of Future Meetings) was queried, as it stated that members of the public would be contacted with the dates of future meetings, and a member of the public said that this had not happened.

It was explained that there had been some confusion, because the meeting had to be re-arranged at short notice, because of strike action. In addition, an embargo had been placed on the delivering of publicity leaflets to residents' houses because an employee had previously been injured in the process. However, it was acknowledged that this had been a very effective way of publicising meetings and Members had requested that this practice be re-instated. For this particular meeting, posters had been sent out to shops and other venues. Any further suggestions of who might be willing to display a poster would be very welcome. Members of the public were asked to talk to Julie Harget, Committee Services Officer, or Kate Owen, Member Support Officer at the end of the meeting, about publicity or if they wished to have agendas and minutes mailed directly to them in the future.

It was agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Castle Community Meeting held on 22 April 2008 were a correct record.

16. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ISSUES

Andrew L Smith, Service Director, Planning and Policy, was introduced to the meeting. Andrew explained that he was pleased to attend the meeting to lead a question and answer session relating to planning issues, as he had been aware that a considerable number of issues had been raised at the previous meeting. Andrew invited Members of the public to raise their concerns or questions relating to Planning issues in the Clarendon Park area. The following questions/points were raised:

- **There was over development in the area; some houses had been split up into flats, and this appeared to be in conflict with the ethos of a conservation area. There was also an issue with absentee landlords. Did they have the same input into an area, as people who lived in the area?**

Andrew explained that the Planning Department were aware of these problems, adding that these issues occurred in other areas, not just Clarendon Park. He added that the City Council Policy Planners, and officers who dealt with planning applications were currently looking into these concerns particularly in terms of developing new planning policies for the future.

- **There appeared to be dozens of two bedroom flats being built on land just outside the conservation area. The dominance of these flats as opposed to anything else, which were designed for young professional couples, meant that there was nothing for older people. This did not lead to a balanced community.**

Andrew replied that this issue reflected trends that had arisen during the past few years in the housing market, and was not specific to Clarendon Park. However the housing market was changing and there were now different attitudes to development, with more opportunities for developers to move into the affordable housing market. It was noted however that within Clarendon Park, there were not many sites where a range and choice of new housing provision was feasible. However, meetings had taken place with the Housing Association and Social Landlords to discuss how developments could address peoples' needs, though there were limits to what the Council could control. Councils also were obliged to adhere to Government policies as well as their own when dealing with planning applications.

- **Who leads the process? Is it the Developer or the Council?**

Andrew explained that the Planning Authority managed the process of dealing with planning applications and developing their own policies, which included policies on conservation areas. The Council's policies were set out in their Local Plan, which was due to be replaced by the new Local Development Framework.

- **Is there anything in the Plan relating to family housing?**

It was explained that the Council were obliged to adhere to the national housing targets. These targets stipulated that 35,000 houses should be built within a 25 year period to satisfy all needs. Policies do not specifically favour family housing although influence can be brought to bear when requiring affordable housing provision.

- **What is the time scale for the Local Plan?**

The current Local Plan was scheduled to expire by 2016. However, the Local Plan was due to be replaced by the new Local Development Framework, which, once adopted would then be in force until 2026.

- **Were there any consultations in respect of the Local Development Framework?**

Andrew explained that Council officers attended a variety of meetings, including Community meetings such as this, and by doing this gained views from members of the public, which were then used to inform the process.

- **Do you take into account the views of residents in considering planning applications?**

The meeting heard that the Council went over and above the national guidelines in inviting views on planning applications from residents. However the Council was also obliged to follow Government guidelines; which dictated for example, the affordable housing threshold.

- **There had been occasions when the Planning Committee had refused an application, only for a developer to appeal against the decision. The Council needed a strong framework to prevent such appeals.**

Andrew explained that the Local Development Framework was open to scrutiny by the Planning Inspector. Additionally, any decision of the Planning Inspector had to be accepted by the Council. The meeting heard that it was hoped this new Framework would be operational within a year and that it would provide a new policy on which planning decisions could be based.

Members of the public were informed that there would be more opportunities to talk to Andrew during the information fair session at the end of the formal meeting.

17. RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME

Kim Lampitt, from Social Research Associates Ltd, was introduced to the meeting. It was explained that parking had been an issue around the Clarendon Park area, for some time, and there had been considerable discussion concerning this, at the last Community Meeting. Social Research Associates Ltd, had carried out an independent survey and Kim had been invited to the meeting to speak about this.

Kim explained that in the second week of June, Social Research Associates Ltd had staffed a mobile stall in Clarendon Park, in order to conduct a short survey. This survey gave the following results:

- Support for the residents' parking scheme varied from 41% to 74% in favour, depending on whereabouts in the Clarendon Park area people lived.
- People in the area from Clarendon Park Road, Victoria Park Road, Welford Road to West Avenue were particularly in favour of having a residents parking scheme.
- Parking problems in the evenings were significantly greater than during the morning, which showed that commuters were not necessarily responsible.
- People felt that enforcement was important.
- Residents wanted visitors to Queens Road to be able to park in order to enjoy the facilities there.
- People wanted limited waiting time in their streets.

Kim explained that Social Research Associates Ltd planned to create a leaflet to be sent to every house in the consultation area in the near future, to ask if residents wanted a residents parking scheme.

Various questions were raised as follows:

- **Will the questionnaire state the nature of the parking scheme? It was important that the viability of Queens Road should be maintained.**

Kim replied that they would try to give as much information as possible, to help residents reach a decision.

Andrew Thomas, Head of City Development explained that the Council were trying to recognise that in part of Clarendon Park, over 70% of residents wanted to move forward with the parking scheme. However, there was a need for more consultation, which would take place with residents, emergency services and bus companies etc. There was a statutory process to follow which also laid down timescales to adhere to.

- **I was surprised that Social Research Associates Ltd were doing this work. I don't think that 250 replies was a substantial response. Why didn't you do a door- to- door exercise?**

Kim replied that the purpose behind the initial survey was to get an understanding of the process and added that they would be leafleting all the houses in target area, which would involve 3,300 residences.

- **Will the leaflets go to the whole of the consultation area?**

The meeting heard that the whole area would be targeted, not just the core area.

- **What would be the effect of the parking scheme on Queens Road businesses? A similar scheme that was implemented in Oadby and Wigston, resulted in Oadby being very quiet in the afternoons after 3.00pm.**

Kim responded that there was a need to address the issue of visitors to Clarendon Park having sufficient time to do their shopping, generally browse round the shops and perhaps stop for refreshments if required. There was also a need to consider parking for those staff who worked in the area.

- **I have a residential property in the area, and a business on Queens Road. About five years ago, I submitted a very detailed plan, which provided a solution to our parking problems. I never received an acknowledgement for this.**

Andrew Thomas requested that if possible, this plan should be sent to him, and he gave an assurance that the plan would be acknowledged.

- **Property developments have created a greater demand for parking.**

This whole issue is being looked at and will be tightened up. This problem had been raised at the Planning and Development Control Committee, where the need, for example, for the provision of adequate cycle parks had also been discussed.

- **What was the cost of the Residents Parking Scheme and where was the funding coming from?**

The Castle and Knighton Area Committee budget had initially approved £2,000 towards the consultation. The scheme itself would be partly funded by S106 money, taken from Developer's Contributions. The legal costs for the scheme would be £5 - £6,000.

The meeting heard that Councillors were aware from talking to their constituents, that there were many concerns over parking, which were especially highlighted in those streets which were in close proximity to Clarendon Park. These concerns were also supported by the initial survey findings. As Councillors, they had a need therefore to respond to these concerns, hence the need for a consultation. The meeting heard that Councillors and the Council were mindful of the need to protect residents and shopkeepers, and this would be a priority throughout the process.

Action	Officer Identified	Deadline
A leaflet to be sent to every house in the consultation area, to ask residents whether they wanted a residents parking scheme	Kim Lampitt, Social Research Associates Ltd	End of September 2008

18. WARD PRIORITIES

The meeting heard that a Ward Action Plan for the Castle Ward, would be developed which would address the main priorities that had been raised by residents when completing their priority cards.

The initial findings from the priority cards already completed were as follows:

- Building development and diminution of the Conservation Area
- Street scene issues including dog fouling and cleaning
- Parking problems

While these findings would help to inform the Ward Action Plan, it was also important that the views of residents in other parts of Castle Ward were obtained. The next meeting would therefore be held in a different part of the Ward.

19. COMMUNITY MEETING BUDGET

Kate Owen explained that the overall Community Meeting budget was £12,000, which consisted of three individual budgets as follows:

- £6,700 in the General Community Fund to address the priorities identified in the Ward Action Plan.
- £3,300 also in the General Community Fund, which could be allocated to projects that would contribute to the quality of life for residents in the ward.
- £2,000 to support community cohesion or bringing the community together.

People were encouraged to apply for funding for projects that the Council would not normally be expected to pay for.

20. FUTURE MEETING

The next Castle Community Meeting will be held on Tuesday 9 September at the Leicester Rugby Football Club/Tigers Ground on Aylestone Road. The Street Cleaning team will be present at that meeting.

INFORMATION FAIR

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 the local Police and to bring enquiries and raise and issues.

Table 1

Ward Councillors and General Enquiries

Members of the public were given an opportunity to talk to Ward Councillors or raise any general enquiries with Council staff.

- Table 2** **10,000 Trees Scheme**
Barbara Walker from Groundwork, was available to talk to residents about the scheme and to receive suggestions for identifying sites to plant new trees.
- Table 3** **Stoneygate Conservation Area Society**
Members of the public were given an opportunity to talk to Nick Knight from the Stoneygate Conservation Area Society.
- Table 4** **Traffic Calming, Clarendon Park Road.**
Graham Seaton, Transport Development, Regeneration and Culture was available to talk to residents about traffic calming in Clarendon Park Road.
- Table 5** **Local Involvement Network.**
James Hellard and Jon Davis were present to talk to members of the public about how they could get involved in this network, which will look at how health services are delivered in Leicester.

Andrew L Smith, Service Director, Planning and Policy and Kim Lampitt, from Social Research Associates were also available to talk to members of the public on any further issues relating to planning and development control and the residents parking scheme respectively.

21. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

