



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the Land Management Companies theme of the
REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT TASK GROUP

Held: WEDNESDAY 11TH FEBRUARY at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Newcombe – Chair

Councillor Dempster

Councillor Hunt

Officers Present:

Alison Bowen	- Planning Policy
Jerry Connolly	- Members Support Officer
David Cotton	- Planning Management and Delivery
Mike Keen	- Democratic Services Officer
Bob Mullins	- Parks and Green Spaces

Hamilton Residents Association

Martin Lester

- Hamilton Residents Association

* * * * *

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Nick Logan – Planning Policy and Design.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair disclosed a personal and non-prejudicial interest in the business to be discussed as a resident of Bradgate Heights.

14. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting of the Land Management Companies theme of the Regeneration and Transport Task Group held on 8th December 2010, as previously circulated, were agreed as a correct record.

15. GATHERING OF EVIDENCE

The Chair gave a brief introduction and Jerry Connolly stated that he had met with representatives from Greenbelt, the Land Management Company involved with the maintenance of land at North Hamilton and other sites within the City, on Wednesday 9th February. Copies of the notes of the meeting were circulated at the meeting.

Greenbelt Group

Represented by: -

Andrew Hampton – Greenbelt England Regional Development Director and

Gareth Davies – Greenbelt Business Development Director

Andrew Hampton opened the discussion by stating that he had seen a set of the Minutes from the first meeting and wished to present a balanced view to the Task Group.

The company had started over 12 years ago as a result of funding made available from Strathclyde Regional Council. Now Greenbelt was a private limited company that managed a range of sites from Scotland to Cornwall. The size of sites managed varied enormously.

Around 31k properties on managed sites paid an annual management charge to Greenbelt, these equated to an average of £125 per property. An additional 25k properties were also contracted and would transfer to Greenbelt soon.

Councillor Dempster – questioned whether there was one person at Greenbelt who was responsible for the open space at Bradgate Heights.

Andrew Hampton – stated that each region had a Regional Operations Manager (ROM) who visited all sites to inspect work carried out. However, all complaints and issues regarding maintenance of sites were to be directed through the Glasgow based Customer Care Department, the main reason for this was to enable close monitoring of performance to be carried out. Any concerns highlighted then could be referred direct to the appropriate ROM.

Councillor Dempster – asked how Greenbelt knew that all residents on their managed developments fully understood about Greenbelt and their responsibilities, particularly in properties that were rented or purchased second hand.

Andrew Hampton – stated that Greenbelt did not have direct contact with residents at Bradgate Heights, but on the sites where direct contact was in place a Residents Pack was provided which contained all relevant information. Greenbelt realised that there was a problem keeping in touch with all residents

Councillor Dempster – stated that a Residents Association was in place at Bradgate Heights and they had their own website. It was suggested that Greenbelt forward relevant information to the Residents Association for

inclusion on the website as this would be a way of allowing residents to better understand Greenbelt.

Andrew Hampton – stated that this seemed to be to be a very good idea that would be pursued. The site at Bradgate Heights was provided by a commuted sum from the developers but Greenbelt were moving towards those sites provided by way of Greenspace funding as direct contact could then be established with residents. It was further agreed that arrangements would be made for the Greenbelt ROM to attend a Residents Meeting at Bradgate Heights and establish dialogue with residents.

Hamilton was an open space within a developing site that was likely to take 14/15 years to complete and was being developed in phases.

Martin Lester – stated that there were different issues at Hamilton where there were 3 separate areas of open space, 1 EPM, 1 no-charge area and Greenbelt. Residents did not see Greenbelt staff on site but sub-contractors. Residents then questioned why they were paying a charge to Greenbelt.

Andrew Hampton – stated that Greenbelt had decided at an early stage to employ local contractors to carry out work and the points raised were valid and could be addressed by badging contractors vehicles and their personnel. It was also **agreed** that Greenbelt would establish contact with the Hamilton Residents Association.

Dave Cotton – in response to a query regarding making residents aware of LMC's and whether Land Management Companies would appear on local land searches it was stated that it was not likely that our staff would reveal LMC's as the searches were more about disclosing planning applications pending near the sites being searched. It was stated that it was ironic that the recently abolished Home Owner packs might well have disclosed LMC's.

Chair – stated that earlier in the meeting regular inspections by Greenbelt had been referred to and questioned whether public attendance by the public at these inspections would be welcomed.

Gareth Davies – stated that Greenbelt would prefer to engage prior to the inspections, as involving the public in the inspection process relied on the ROM being on site at a certain time and day, from experience these times could vary depending on issues found on sites visited.

By engaging prior to the meeting at set times of the year, issues raised by residents could be taken up by the ROM.

It was **agreed** that Greenbelt would liaise with the relevant Residents Associations and set a series of dates, say every 3 months, when concerns could be fed through to Greenbelt.

Martin Lester – stated that there were some issues around some of the Sustainable Urban Drainage Sites (SUDS) that could be lethal at certain times

of the year to children.

Andrew Hampton – responded by stating that adequate signage was provided and the danger aspect should really be addressed by parents. There were further issues around SUDS in that some residents were siting washing machines in their garden sheds and piping the outlet into their roof water drains, this led to pollution of the SUDS that meant specialists had to be called in to cleanse the SUD.

Jerry Connolly – questioned whether Greenbelt would be averse to their performance, contract conditions and standards being written into the City Council's planning conditions.

Andrew Hampton – felt that this was a good idea and suggested that some standardisation between local authorities regarding planning procedures and conditions would be helpful.

Dave Cotton – stated that the City Council's planning conditions were still largely geared to assuming that open space areas would be adopted by the City Council and that certain standards would be assumed before they were adopted. There was a need to consider what standard of work was required in the case of LMC's. A way forward might be for LMC's to submit their Management Plan to the City Council for approval.

Bob Mullins – questioned whether, once the planning condition had been discharged, would ongoing monitoring be carried out.

Dave Cotton – stated that at up to what point could a Council enforce conditions, as once there is an assurance that the appropriate mechanism was in place then the Council could not go beyond that.

Gareth Davies – stated that LMC's found it difficult when developers did not comply with specific planning conditions regarding open spaces. After the developers left the site LMC's then got the blame by residents for the non-compliance.

Councillor Hunt – stated that by engaging with Residents Associations then this problem would be greatly reduced as residents would be that much better informed.

Jerry Connolly – questioned whether Greenbelt felt that the S.106 process was the best way of setting out the long term management plans for open space.

Dave Cotton – stated that it would be a question of when the LMC's came onboard.

Andrew Hampton – stated that Greenbelt would like to become involved in a Working Group of relevant partners to develop Management Plans to form part of the planning process.

Jerry Connolly – stated that there were several models of relationships between LMC's, residents and developers that included Social Enterprises.

Andrew – stressed that Greenbelt were a land owning company and, as such, would not want to become a contractor to a residents group as conflicts were then not easily resolved.

Andrew Hampton and Gareth Davies representing Greenbelt were thanked for their contribution to the Review.

16. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was suggested that a further meeting be arranged in March 2011 to conclude the Review and make recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

17. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 1.28 pm.

