

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 28 November 2011

Held at: Coleman Primary School, Gwendolen Road.

Who was there:

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Dr Chowdhury
Councillor Dawood

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.

Ward Councillors and General Information Talk to your local councillors or raise general queries	Police Issues Talk to your Local Police about issues or raise general queries.
District Heating Scheme Obtain information on upgrades and improvements planned	

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.

55. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Dawood was elected Chair for the meeting.

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Ayub Sotta.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made at this time.

58. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting of Spinney Hills Community Meeting held on 19th September 2011, as previously circulated, be agreed as a correct record.

59. CITY COUNCIL COMBINED HEAT AND POWER PROJECT

The Community Meeting was informed that a 25 year contract to improve and extend the current Leicester District Heating Scheme had recently been awarded to COFELY District Energy. This company would be responsible for the design, build and maintenance of the Leicester District Heating Scheme. The system worked on the principal of an engine producing energy and then heat was gathered from the energy to provide heat that was then pumped through a network of pipes to houses on the system.

Representatives from COFELY District energy, based locally at 4 De Montfort Street, attended the meeting and stated that the company, formed in 2009, was owned by GDF Suez, the largest utility company in the world. COFELY District Energy now operated four major district heating schemes across the country, Southampton, Birmingham, Olympics site and now Leicester. Southampton had had an operational scheme for 25 years, Birmingham 5 years and the Olympics site and the Westfield Centre had just gone live.

COFELY had invested some £15 in the Leicester scheme to provide new pipework to connect new and existing systems and to link into the existing system. There were plans to connect Leicester Prison, the Tigers Stadium, and Leicester Royal Infirmary to the existing District Heating Scheme, as well as connecting the City Council buildings and the University. The aim was to have a big central heating system across the City. The whole City System was due to be commissioned by November 2012.

On a local level there were plans to connect the current systems for St. Matthews and St. Marks together, expected to be complete by February 2012, and this would involve various trenches to be dug to install the necessary pipework and lasting until after Christmas. A pilot metering scheme was due to start locally in January whereby 23 individual properties had already been selected to enable an assessment to be made of energy use prior to the new scheme starting, these properties represented a mix of the properties found locally. The results of this metering would enable comparisons to be made with results already gathered from other areas.

Overall the system was a reliable and sustainable system and COFELY were working with the City Council to agree the cost of heating to residents and a local Energy Improvement Manager would be appointed shortly.

At this point members of the public present raised a number of questions and comments, summarised as follows: -

A member of the public stated that adequate information on the changes to the District Heating Scheme had not been made available. In response it was stated that every tenant had been sent a letter from the City Council's Housing Department and two public meetings had also been held locally, both of which had been well attended.

It was stated that the scheme had not been presented well and clarification was sought as to whether COFELY were going to be operating the existing systems until such time as the new equipment and pipework had been completed in November 2012. In reply it was stated that this was the case and that the new system would provide low cost efficient heating that was also energy efficient, and the pipework would incorporate leak detection system enabling leaks to be pinpointed within 1m. Another advantage of the system was that because the heat was supplied from a network it would be entirely possible to move heat from one part of the City to another should a boiler house fail.

A member of the public questioned how the system could guarantee low costs as suggested earlier in the meeting. In response it was stated that the heat engine was powered by gas and that gas was a market commodity and subject to price fluctuations. All COFELY could do was ensure that maximum efficiency of the system to help ensure that costs can be kept stable.

In conclusion it was suggested and agreed that a separate meeting be held between Ward Councillors, officers and representatives of COFELY to discuss any issues outstanding.

RESOLVED:
that the information be noted.

60. HIGHWAY ISSUES IN THE ST. MATTHEW'S AREA

Officers from the City Council attended the meeting in response to a request for feedback on the following topics: -

- Highways and Traffic
- State of the Roads
- Residents Parking Scheme

Residents Parking

It was reported that in response to resident's concerns No Waiting restrictions had been implemented on four separate roads on St. Matthews, including Manitoba Road and Chester Close. Parking enforcement on these roads were covered by Traffic Enforcement Officers.

Requests had now been received to introduce similar restrictions to Edmonton Road, Malabar Road, Lethbridge Close and Ontario Close.

Officers stated that an experimental residents Parking Scheme was currently operating in part of the South Highfields area and a similar scheme would be considered for St. Matthews as it would not be possible to construct sufficient laybys to make a difference on the estate. At the present time certain residents had asked for a Residents Parking Scheme but the areas where they lived did not link up. The City Council would be prepared to consider introducing a Scheme in an arc across the estate but this would depend on residents. Should the stage be reached whereby a Residents Parking Scheme was drawn up a ballot of residents in the area of the scheme would take place. If, as a result of the ballot, the majority of residents responding opposed the Scheme then it would not be implemented. Should the residents Parking Scheme be supported then it would be possible to tailor it to meet the needs of residents. A fee of £25 would be imposed as an admin fee on all residents. All objections to a proposed Scheme would be reported to Cabinet and then, as soon as they had been successfully addressed, could the signs and necessary lines be provided.

Discussion took place around Residents Parking in general and of the view that the £25 fee should not apply to Blue Badge holders, together with the recipients of disability benefits.

A member of the public questioned how space was allocated for residents/cars. Officers stated that the Council did not allocate space and in areas, such as St. Matthews, where the number of residents vehicles exceeded the number of spaces available, then a Residents Parking Scheme would be unable to address the problems outlined, but only as far as preventing commuter parking. Permits for visitors were available and the other major issue was the effect on local businesses, although the City Council tried to provide laybys in streets not covered by the Residents Parking Scheme.

A member of the public questioned what provision would be made for workers that came to the estate to work. Officers responded by stating that the City Council would only try and prevent commuters and shoppers from parking on the estate, but it would not be possible to restrict motorists with a permit from parking within the Scheme area.

It was further reported that the holder of a permit would not be guaranteed a parking space outside their house, or even within the Scheme area, as this would depend on the number of vehicles with valid permits already within the Scheme area.

A member of the public suggested that areas of gardens and grassed areas, not being used, could be converted into parking areas. Officers stated that they would look at this and stated that in other areas of the City it had been possible to reduce the width of footways to provide parking, although this would probably not be feasible on St. Matthews.

A member of the public stated that he had recently visited a project on the estate and had found his car ticketed. Officers stated that, as in other areas, visitors permits would be made available and parking arrangements for Places of Worship could also be arranged.

A member of the public stated that there were a lot of cul-de-sacs on St. Matthews estate, and questioned whether a Residents Parking Scheme would be implemented on a street by street basis. Officers stated that a recent request to implement Traffic restrictions in one such street had been allowed, although to make a Scheme effective several adjoining streets were preferred.

In concluding it was stated that the issue of Residents Parking had initially been raised at a meeting with the City Mayor. Residents needed to be clear that permits were £25 per vehicle and to hold a permit would not guarantee a parking space, particularly outside their house, or even street. The City Council had not yet decided on Residents Parking for St. Matthews but residents needed to be aware of the issues favouring a scheme, and those issues against a scheme.

State of the Roads

It was reported that planned works in the City had been funded by the City Council and the Department for Transport (DfT).

In the past the City Council had allocated Local Environmental Works Fund monies to provide such facilities as laybys or other off-street parking. The funding had been allocated on a priority basis of requests received, and approved by Cabinet each year.

Each year the City Council undertook a survey of the condition of roads across the City and then the worst roads were targeted for repair, with major routes being the priority. Over the past year over 600 requests for service were logged for Spinney Hills Ward, resulting in 392 potholes being filled in.

A member of the public stated that there were a lot of irresponsible drivers coming to the estate and with the number of children on the streets going either to school or Madrassa more traffic calming should be considered and also more pedestrian crossings provided.

A member of the public stated that there was a need to widen Christow Street as the 21/21A bus stop was located here and caused obstruction.

Officers agreed to take details of these issues and report back.

A member of the public stated that there were a couple of mini-roundabouts, one on the junction of Madras/Manitoba Road and one on Montreal Road, that were dangerous and should be removed. Officers agreed to take details and look into the problems reported.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

61. CITY WARDEN, POLICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES

Inspector Bill Knopp opened by introducing the St. Matthews Local Policing Team.

In St. Matthews there had been a small increase in crime overall of 2%, but a reduction in vehicle crime of 30%. Burglaries had increased slightly and local residents were being urged to leave lights on if they were going to be out after dark as this would create the impression that the property was occupied. Robberies were also slightly up with young people being targeted , particularly for mobile phones.

Operation Lake was underway that was targeted at drug dealing and street dealing. The operation had been running for just one week and 3 arrests had been made. The operation was open ended and it was important for any information from local residents that could possibly help investigations to be forwarded.

A member of the public stated that since the shop outside the Sports Centre had gone to 24 hour operation crime had increased. Insp. Knopp stated that the police would look into this and gather information.

It was reported that, following an incident the previous night, that the fences at the rear of properties in Malabar Road were to be removed to dissuade the 'working girls' that frequent the area. It was also hoped that additional CCTV cameras would be installed in the area.

Nazira Vanja, Community Safety Team stated that the team were working to help tackle community safety issues across the City.

Darren Evans, City Warden stated that he would give a full presentation at the next meeting, but in the meantime he was happy to deal with any problems that were within his remit.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

62. BUDGET

Anita Patel, Member Support Officer gave an update on the Community Meeting Budget and reported that the Budget for the year had been £15,000, and to date £7,313 had been spent, leaving a remaining balance of £7,687.

Anita explained that four funding applications had been received and were included on the agenda. Councillors had considered the applications in detail prior to the meeting.

- 1) **Leicester United Sports and Culture** **£500**
Removing ‘Gang Mind’ of the Young Generation within our Community

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of **£370**.

- 2) **Shubaan** **£1,000**

Seeking funding to pay hire charges at Highfields Centre to enable sporting activities to be held as well as a seminar on the recent riots and get the thoughts of young people of Spinney Hills.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of **£1,000**.

- 3) **St. Matthews Tenants Association** **£500**

Seeking funding to establish a small tool bank of equipment including spades, forks, rakes and a battery lawn mower for residents to maintain their gardens or cultivate the areas of land allocated to grow vegetables.

RESOLVED:

That the funding application be supported to the value of **£500**.

- 4) **Resident representative from Mahatma Gandhi House, Sabarmati House and Azad House** **£200**

Seeking funding to hold a multi-faith cohesion function.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of **£200**.

Anita reported that a late application had been received as summarised below:

- 5) **Spinney Hills Police/Community Safety** **£1,200**

Seeking funding for a Burglary hardening Scheme in the area, involving the purchase and delivery to recent and potential victims of burglary of window locks and timer switches. The funding would enable some 120 properties to be covered.

RESOLVED:

that the funding application be supported to the value of **£500** at this meeting, the balance to be considered at the next meeting.

63. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held at 6.00pm on Monday 12th March 2012, venue to be confirmed.

64. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.13pm.

