

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:15 pm, Friday, 28 September 2012

Held at: Hamilton Library, Maidenwell Avenue, Leicester. LE5 1BL

Who was there:

Councillor Rita Patel

Councillor Barbara Potter

Councillor Gurinder Singh Sandhu

Also in Attendance: Councillor Piara Singh Clair

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Rita Patel was elected Chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Potter disclosed an 'other disclosable interest' in Minute 8 – Budget – Northfields Playbarn as one of her children occasionally attended the Playbarn.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Humberstone and Hamilton Community Meeting held on 29th February 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

5. ISSUES RELATING TO THE HAMILTON AREA OF THE WARD

Copies of maps were distributed at the meeting that depicted the greenspace areas of Hamilton that were covered by Greenbelt and also by the City Council. A third map showed the streets that were the responsibility of the City Council and those that were yet to be adopted.

i) Housing Development off Keyham Lane

Greg Mitchell, representing Framptons, agents for the developers of this site, attended the meeting and outlined the details of the planned development. The planning application was for 419 properties within the City Council boundaries and the proposals had been advertised locally.

A public meeting had been held during May 2012 at Hamilton Library where the proposals had been outlined in greater detail. 44 local residents had attended the meeting but Ward Councillors and the Right Hon. Keith Vaz M.P. had not been contacted and they had therefore been unaware of the meeting. The main issues raised at the meeting had been around transport issues and the extra traffic generated as well as the vehicular access onto Keyham Lane that had been identified as emergency access only onto Keyham Lane.

It was reported that the outline planning application was seeking to establish the principle of the proposed development for up to 419 new homes. There

would be no overspill parking onto surrounding roads and it was stated that the previous planning application for this site had been for 550 units. Negotiations with the City Council were still ongoing.

The Chair stated that the local infrastructure had not kept pace with development in the area and sought assurances that this new development would not make things more difficult for local residents.

Members of the public stated that there were already serious traffic issues around Kestrels Field School and the new housing development would likely bring more children to the area.

Greg stated that the current Government policy was to build new houses and the developers of this site were endeavouring to make this site as sustainable as possible, as well as providing adequate car parking and roads as well as looking to make an off-site contribution to infrastructure. Greg stated that, regarding pressures to local infrastructure he was not able to advise his client to do something that was not within the guidance that currently existed.

A member of the public, who was a governor at Kestrels Field School, had been led to understand at a recent meeting at the school that any contribution from the developers to fund educational facilities would be directed to Charnwood rather than Kestrels Field. Greg responded by stating that he would be very surprised if Section 106 funding would go to Charnwood rather than Kestrels Field School.

Greg stated that it was anticipated that the outline planning application would be taken to the City Council's Planning and Development Control Committee on 7th November for determination.

Mike Richardson, Acting Head of Planning at the City Council stated that the City Council sought developer contributions to benefit the infrastructure within the City, and in this case would be seeking developer contributions to enhance school provision. Advice would be sought from officers within the City Council on the availability of school places within the area of this development.

The Chair questioned whether developer contributions in respect of education provision from this site would actually go to Charnwood. Regarding the other housing site, adjacent to this site, but located in Charnwood, it was expected that the developer contributions would go to Charnwood Borough Council.

Councillor Potter stated that children coming into the Hamilton area were already being educated outside of this area.

Mike stated that any decision of where to spend money for education purposes would be made by the City Council. Section 106 funding received was generally spent within the locality of the respective development.

A member of the public state that, resulting from the two housing developments referred to, where in Hamilton would a school be built as existing schools could not be expanded. Should children have to be transported to other areas then this will lead to extra traffic on the roads. Mike responded by saying that he understood that there was a site on Hamilton that had not yet been developed as a school. In the short term mobile classrooms could be provided to cover the period whilst a new school was built. The Education Service would determine where such funding was spent.

A member of the public suggested that a strategy for the whole area was required in order to gain a better understanding how the proposals outlined would fit in.

Agreed – that the officers would provide details of the site available in Hamilton for a school as well as developer contributions delivered in Hamilton since the estate was built.

ii) **Keith Vaz M.P.**

Keith Vaz M.P. stated that he could remember the area before building was started.

This development represented a watershed and gave a reason to look at the future of Hamilton.

The three Ward Councillors in Humberstone and Hamilton Ward were undertaking an outstanding role to represent the residents of the ward.

This was an opportunity to solve a number of problems such as, who owns the common land, why were monies paid to a company in Glasgow, why part of your Council Tax could not be allocated to maintaining open spaces rather than paying an external company.

One way forward would be for a large scale map of Hamilton to be prepared and for Ward Councillors, Planning and Education officers and other respective people to meet and identify where everything was, where the additional housing was to be located and where there was an identified need for additional infrastructure to be provided. Unfortunately Tesco's retained a tight control on development at Hamilton Centre.

Additional people would put pressures on the local infrastructure and local people should be consulted on new developments. There was a need also to look at the local road network to assess whether it was capable of handling the additional traffic generated.

Developers should be told that new housing was required but negotiation should be carried out on how the final development looked. Information on how any Section 106 funding obtained had been spent in this areawould be welcomed.

In conclusion local residents paid their taxes and wanted services in return. Mr.Vaz stated that he would support local people in the development of a Master Plan for the Hamilton area.

iii) Traffic Issues

Michael Jeeves, Team Leader Travel Planning and Development Co-ordination attended the meeting to respond to traffic issues raised.

Members of the public raised concerns around speeding traffic on Sandhills Avenue, and parked cars around Hope Hamilton School.

Michael stated that Sandhills Avenue was already traffic calmed and, should additional calming be required then this would be funded from the Citywide fund and such a scheme would compete with other schemes. Regarding vehicle parking in the vicinity of Hope Hamilton School Road Safety officers were currently working with the school to try and address road safety measures.

Councillor Potter stated that the City Council had already invested in roads in the area and now needed to look at ways spending on effective measures.

Michael outlined that work was ongoing to get developers to bring roads on Hamilton up to a required standard enabling the City Council to adopt them. Once adopted the City Council would then be able to look at providing measures to address speeding and parked vehicles.

iv) Greenspaces/Adoption of Streets/Contact Details

The Chair stated that there was a lot of confusion around who did what in the Hamilton area, with issues around payments to contractors, non-payments and of residents being taken to court. A meeting had been held previously been held in November 2011 where Greenbelt had explained a lot of the issues raised.

Andrew Hampton – Greenbelt

Andrew stated that the Head office of Greenbelt was based in Glasgow but he was based in Leeds. Local contractors were used to cut grass and maintain open spaces and the respective supervisors were also locally based. Greenbelt had been appointed by the developers of Hamilton to maintain greenspaces and the Sustainable Urban Drainage Scheme (SUDS), one of the largest in the country, although knowledge of the system was provided by the University of Abertay, Dundee and works around dealing with silting of the system was undertaken by sub-contractors. A local Operations Manager visited the site periodically and also to assess areas of concern raised.

Andrew stated that collection issues regarding the management charge were dealt with by the Billing Section at Greenbelt. Within Greenbelt management areas all residential properties contributed for works undertaken. Customer Care details were made available to residents and they were encouraged to use this facility.

Members of the public raised the issue of fly-tipping on a certain area of the estate and, having identified the area, Andrew stated that this was an area of land that was still the responsibility of Persimmon Homes, although Greenbelt were about to take this area of land over although final negotiations were still underway. Following further discussion Andrew agreed to get the fly-tipped materials cleared from the site identified.

A member of the public stated that, following damage sustained at the play area under the responsibility of Greenbelt, contact had been made with Greenbelt and the damage had been repaired. As a suggestion it was felt that Greenbelt should place contact details on the play area so that people using the facility could identify who to contact.

A member of the public stated that some residents were paying both Greenbelt and Severn Trent Water for water going into the SUDS. Severn Trent should be saying that they should not be being paid and refund monies paid. Andrew stated that he would get a statement out to residents.

In concluding the Chair suggested that Greenbelt get someone to visit the areas identified, together with representatives from the Hamilton Residents Association, the City Warden and the Police. Andrew stated that the locally based supervisor would be asked to get in touch.

v) **City Highways**

Michael Jeeves outlined the process leading to the adoption of streets by the City Council. The first stage was for the City Council to sign a Section 38 Agreement with the respective developer(s). The developers were then required to build roads to a certain required standard and then they were able to approach the City Council with a request to adopt. The City Council would then inspect the said roads and identify any remedial works required. As soon as the remedial works had been completed the City Council would re-inspect and, if satisfactory, would issue a provisional certificate that would remain in force for 12 months. During this 12 month period the developers would be responsible for maintenance.

In the Hamilton the main areas were North Hamilton and Quakesick Valley and where there had been 20 separate phases of development involving 8 developers and the Hamilton Trustees. Some 4 phases had been adopted during 2012, including Sandhills Avenue, although the streets off it had not yet been adopted. It was anticipated that double yellow lines would soon be installed around Hope Hamilton School and the City Council would enforce these. Streets in the Quakesick Valley area were likely to be adopted very soon.

Michael stated that a further map would be released soon that would indicate which streets had been adopted by the City Council and which streets were yet to be adopted, with an indication which developer was responsible for these streets.

vi) **'More Houses or More Hostages to Fortune'**

Copies of a newspaper article written by John Burrows, local resident, were circulated. The article, as printed in the Leicester Mercury was as follows: -

“Since the war, Governments have demanded more and more houses. But (a Big But), at what cost? Thousands of acres of Open Space have been lost and “England’s Green and Pleasant Land” is fast becoming a dream in the race for political “Brownie points.”

Presumption in favour of Approval is being drummed into Local Councils, and this is well known to “Developers” keen to make mega-bucks of profit and: “To Hell with Local Plans and Policies.”

“Developers” don’t give a damn about the extra demands on existing Public Services and Utilities. Neither do they care for the feelings of Local People and most likely to be affected by their “nightmare dreams.”
I am sure that they assume the Local Planning Authorities will just “roll over” and place mere cosmetic conditions on granting Permissions. Refusals often mean Appeals, which (again as Developers well know) can be expensive if a Council loses – for its own Taxpayers must foot the Bill!

In Humberstone/Hamilton Ward (in Leicester) for instance, an Appeal is proceeding against a refusal for houses behind 6 Vicarage Lane. In the meantime, the applicant has submitted another Application on the same site for slightly fewer houses! Many Local Folk are “up in arms” as you might expect.

I spoke of the loss of Open Space. Here are some other items on the debit side.

- *Demands for Gas, Water and Electricity will rise. How will they be met?*
- *Sewerage disposal. Will existing Plant works cope?*
- *Domestic Waste and Rubbish increase in direct proportion to the number of People in the “New Housing”. How will Councils manage this?*
- *The “Newcomers” must, of course, be provided with Medical, Surgical and Dental Care. The NHS is already bearing a heavy load with our existing (and ageing!) population. Who will wave the “Magic Wand2 to solve that, I wonder?*
- *More People mean more Children, who will need Schools. “Please Sir, Where will our kids go to School?” Some schools are already at capacity.*
- *Traffic loads on existing roads is something, again, that “Developers” have (perhaps wilfully) ignored as their access roads spiral ever further outward. Yet more noise and pollution? Do “they” care?*
- *Will Public Transport (Bus Companies, for example) be able to meet the demand, or, as I fear, will cars continue to increase as People move in?*
- *Space for Play areas for all age groups: Has that ever been thought through? With many Playing Fields sold off for Housing – what else – what will happen then? The nightmare scenario is that Victoria Park*

*and our other “Green Lungs” will be buried under concrete and bricks!
The precedent exists. Part of Spinney Hill Park was lost to build a
Police Station!*

- *So, there’s the Bill. As to who will pay, are you willing, or, will you fight to preserve our limited living space?”*

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

6. LOCAL POLICING UPDATE

Pc Katie Burnham attended the meeting and gave an update on local policing issues.

School parking was a continual issue and this was being tackled, although with limited resources and limited action that could be taken.

Due to recent changes to local policing in the City the former Neighbourhood Teams were now referred to as Safer Neighbourhood Teams that would include 2 Beacon Officers who would be the point of contact. From next year a larger team would be available.

The Chair of the Hamilton Residents Association (HRA) stated that there were issues around speeding cars on Sandhills Avenue racing between the traffic calming. This issue had already been raised with Community Speedwatch. The Chair suggested that it would be useful if a meeting could be arranged between the police and the HRA and discuss in greater detail the various issues around speeding traffic, decide what was wanted and report back to the Community Meeting.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted.

7. CITY WARDENS

Charlotte Glover, City Warden attended the meeting and had nothing to report, her contact details were posted outside the Library.

8. BUDGET

Anita Patel, Scrutiny Support Officer presented the Community Meeting Budget and reported that the following applications had been received since the last meeting and the decisions are summarised: -

Amount applied for

- i) **Northfields Playbarn – 30th Anniversary** **£1696**
An application had been received from Nothfields Play Association to part fund a Fun Day celebrating 30 years since the opening of the Nothfields Playbarn.

Resolved:

that this application be deferred to enable further information to be obtained from the applicant.

- ii) **City Warden Service – Patrol Bike** **£456.96**
An application had been received from the City Warden to purchase a Patrol Bike to enable her to patrol Humberstone and Hamilton Ward more effectively.

Resolved:

that the application be supported in full - **£456.96**.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was reported that the next meeting of the Humberstone and Hamilton Community Meeting would be held at 6.00pm on Wednesday 5th December 2012 at Netherhall Neighbourhood Centre, Armadale Drive.

11. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.47pm.

