

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

Wednesday, 12 December 2012

6:00 pm

Held at:

Woodgate Resources Centre, 36 Woodgate, Leicester, LE3 5GE

Who was there:

Councillor Ted Cassidy MBE

Councillor Susan Waddington

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this time.

18. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the Minutes of the Fosse Community Meeting held on 19 September 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

19. FOSSE LIBRARY

Councillor Waddington read a written statement prepared by Adrian Wills, Head of Libraries.

It was reported that the first element of the budget decision made in February 2012 for Fosse library had been completed, which principally concerned the review of staffing. The second stage was to procure self-service equipment for Fosse Library and two others in the city, the procurement exercise for which was underway. The Libraries Service expected the two self-service units for Fosse to be installed in June 2013. Until that date, the library would continue to operate under the current arrangements. Once the self-service units were introduced, it was expected that the opening hours of the library would be extended. There would continue to be a member of library staff on duty for some 30 hours a week to help customers.

It was further reported that there were proposals to change the layout of the library and potentially change access to the centre, but the go ahead for this was dependent on it being included within the next capital investment plan which would be announced by the Council in due course.

The update was noted.

20. DEVELOPMENT IN WOODGATE

David Beale, Development Planner, Planning Transportation and Economic Development, presented an update concerning development in the Fosse ward.

David displayed a plan of the development area and indicated sites which had been brought forward for development. He commented on some high profile sites and development areas and explained the planning history to those sites and areas. He asked the meeting to note that in many cases planning approval had been granted for sites but that the schemes remained unimplemented. This was due to a large

extent to the current recession and the resultant financial situation of developers and land owners.

In respect of the buildings and site at Friars Mill, David explained that the site had been purchased by the Council as an investment to allow that part of the city approach to be improved. It was considered that the site would be attractive to developers and the marketing of the site would be aimed at encouraging a high standard of development. The meeting welcomed the initiative to purchase the site. Owners of other derelict and unused buildings in the ward had been approached with a view to them being reused, particularly those buildings along the riverside frontage where it was felt that high quality conversions to offices could be achieved.

The idea of implementing 'greening projects' was explained, whereby sites could be cleared where they had lay redundant for a significant period of time. The importance to undertake this work and to maintain the redundant areas was highlighted and appreciated by the meeting.

In reply to a question David described the consultation process held with developers and potential developers concerning the height and scale and design of permissible developments. The meeting discussed the importance of good design, particularly along the riverside and canal areas. The possibility of enhancing and improving the network of bridges was also discussed. Comments were also raised concerning the need for adequate traffic infrastructure to serve developments. It was noted in some areas that the existing streets would require greater access arrangements than was currently available.

At this point, David referred to item 8 of the Agenda 'Derelict Buildings Update' and advised of the current situation concerning the following sites and areas of concern:

- Gaps in the cycleway between Rally Park/Waterside and Abbey Park
- Poor highways signage at riverside entrance at Rally Park
- Unsightly scaffolding surrounds vulnerable at risk heritage building (Fiveways House - Vernon Street)
- Derelict Church adjacent to Empire pub
- Empire pub boarded up and unsightly
- Factories, Repton St/ Rugby St.
- Potential beneficial use of blue cladding building on Balfour Street, adjacent to Fosse primary school
- Planters by former Premier Screw (A50) Woodgate, Premier Screw
- Fire damaged factory, Frog Island (North Bridge Works)

In discussing the above sites it was considered that future major/high impact developments such as the Empire Pub and Premier Screw sites would require and deserve a high level of consultation concerning future use and design. The suggestion that developers should consult with residents was raised and David explained that this could be requested. It was noted that the thoughts of the meeting would be taken on board by Officers when considering future proposals and applications.

The update was noted and David was thanked for his comprehensive report.

21. RALLY PARK

Councillor Waddington referred to a statement prepared by Ade Edge, Play & Youth Development Officer, Parks & Green Spaces in respect of the above.

It was noted that further to recent enquiries about the absence of a dog-proof fence around the new play area at Rally Park a review of the issue had been undertaken by parks Services and the following information was submitted:

Historically dog-proof fencing had been provided around all of the equipped play areas within Parks & Green Spaces, however this approach had been recently reviewed in the light of advice from leading health & safety professionals and as a reflection of changing practice within the play industry.

Advice had also been taken by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and Play England and the latest view was that play areas should be fenced where there was an identifiable risk to the safety of the children using the play area, for example where there was a busy road or watercourse immediately adjacent to the play space. It was reported that fencing off a play area could lead to an increase in associated risks. The self-closing gates required to ensure that the play area was kept dog-free could themselves pose a risk to small children and by fencing off a play area children could be at a greater risk of being bullied or intimidated by older children and have less potential escape routes from the play area when this occurred. In addition experience had shown that parents are more likely to play with and supervise their children whilst they play in an unfenced play space than in one that is fully enclosed.

Unfortunately experience had also shown that many dog owners also see these areas as an opportunity to let their dogs off the lead without the fear of them running off and as such they could become unofficial dog-exercise areas.

The Dog Exclusion Orders were currently being reviewed to update the schedule of sites covered and the Rally Park play area would be included within that review. Once this review had been completed the City Wardens would have greater powers to deal with the problems with dogs that were currently being experienced at the site.

In conclusion of the statement the cost of providing a dog-proof fence and gates around the play area were described together with the Section 106 contributions available for the enhancement of Rally Park.

The meeting discussed the statement and referred to the overwhelming desire of residents to have the play area fenced. In this respect the petition containing over 200 signatures of local residents was highlighted and it was not considered appropriate to apply the policy as described above to the Rally Park play area, given that the fencing had been expressly requested by the residents themselves. It was further discussed that the policy which covered the situation of play areas overall should not be applied with a blanket approach, and that each play area should be evaluated separately, as each play area had individual and different circumstances. In this respect it was considered by the meeting that the Rally park area was unique in its characteristics and should be assessed on its individual suitability and merits.

In respect of the issues concerning the funding it was noted that significant Section 106 monies remained in outstanding balances and that any shortfall could be made-up using the Ward Community Budget if necessary. It was considered by the meeting that the scheme was not cost-prohibitive and that finance issues should not be used to preclude the suitability of the proposal.

The meeting noted the position and it was agreed to pursue the fencing of the play area and submit an update to a future meeting.

22. SQUARE MILE PROJECT

Mark Charlton gave a presentation concerning the work undertaken by the De Montfort University in respect of the Square Mile Project.

It was reported that the details of the current work had been presented recently to the Chancellor of the University where it had been well received. Inclusion in local gazettes and press attention, particularly from the Leicester Mercury, had led to the project achieving a high profile within the ward and community generally.

In reply to a question Mark advised that the project would continue indefinitely as part of the ongoing community work of the University and referred to the projects 'model' being researched by, and exported to, other Universities and organisations as a model of good practice.

The meeting thanked Mark for his presentation and he was asked to express thanks and congratulations to the University's Chancellor on the success of the project. It was hoped that the work and success of the project would continue to be reported to future ward meetings.

23. DERELICT BUILDINGS UPDATE

This item had been discussed at item 5 of the Agenda 'Development in Woodgate'. (Minute no. 20)

24. POLICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY - UPDATE

PS Andy Goadby and PCSO Andrew Colton updated the meeting with the work carried by the Police in the ward.

In respect of comments raised recently concerning mosquito alarms, Andy referred to a written statement which gave the following background:

- Issues related to ASB in the Fosse area were highlighted at the ASB Joint Management Group at its meeting in January 2011, a range of actions had been taken by partners who included the police and the council to resolve the situation, but none had been fruitful.

- The police requested the installation of a Mosquito device as part of a multi-agency strategy to tackle the issues and since then further support and positive activities were launched in the area. This included a youth club, street intervention by youth services, parenting support, and some positive/direct Police actions including Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and evictions.
- The mosquito device emits a high pitched noise that only young people can hear; because of human rights concerns (as it is indiscriminate in whom it targets) there is a moratorium on its use within the sub-region.
- After consulting the then Chair of Neighbourhood Working Delivery group, in 2011, and taking advice from and discussing the matter with the Head of Youth Offending, it was agreed that a mosquito device would be installed for a trial period.
- In February/ March 2013 an assessment was made on the alarm, it was found that since the alarm had been installed calls relating to ASB had indeed decreased; police felt though that it would be beneficial for the mosquito device to remain over the summer period. Cllr Russell agreed to this request as Assistant Mayor responsible for Neighbourhoods.
- The Police had now re-assessed the situation and had found that the alarm was no longer needed and removed it; those longer term actions suggested above had proven to be successful.

Andy indicated that there has been some displacement of issues but will continue to deal with these through their “business as usual” approach.

Policing issues in the Ward were reported together with the current locations of ASB ‘hotspots’. It was noted and welcomed that crime had fallen in comparison to the same period in the previous year.

In conclusion Andy asked community representative to be aware of a current issue concerning a proliferation of graffiti under two main ‘tags’. The meeting discussed the problems of graffiti generally and Andy asked that locations affected and any new graffiti be reported to the Police or to the Council.

Andy was thanked for his attendance and update.

25. CITY WARDEN

Jethro Swift provided an update on environmental enforcement issues in the Ward.

He made particular reference to the Graffiti team’s work in the Square Mile, the bins on streets initiative, dog fouling, and recent problems caused by the feeding of pigeons in Rally Park.

In concluding his update Jethro introduced Caroline Walsh to the meeting, announcing that Caroline would be providing future updates to the Ward Meetings, as he had been allocated a different area in a recent review and would be serving different Wards in the city in the future.

The meeting welcomed Caroline and expressed their regret that Jethro had been moved. The meeting thanked Jethro for his commitment and particularly for the intelligent and dedicated manner in which he had undertaken his role and wished him well in his new Wards.

26. BUDGET

Surinder Singh, Member Support Officer, presented the latest position with regard to the Ward Community Budget.

Applications for funding from the Ward Community Budget had been received for consideration and funding was approved as follows:

- Woodgate Adventure Playground
Amount £500
Proposal Christmas Pantomime

This application was approved in the sum of £500 under the fast-track procedure.

- City Warden Service
Amount £1,100
Proposal Alley gates, locks and keys

This application was approved. It was reported that £500 had been initially approved under the fast-track procedure and therefore the £600 remaining was approved at the meeting.

- Woodgate Residents Association
Amount £1,200
Proposal Woodgate Hoarding

This application was approved, subject to the receipt of Arts Council funding required to progress the initiative.

- Woodgate Residents Association
Amount £1,000 (reduced at the meeting to £550)
Proposal Replace Gas Cooker with Electric Cooker

The applicant referred to previous funding received which remained unspent and reduced the amount of funding applied for from £1,000 to £550.

The application was approved.

- City Warden and Police Fosse Beat

Amount £2,000

Proposal 4 New Alley Gates

This application was approved.

The following bid, received following the publication of the Agenda was also submitted for consideration:

- Maya Project

Amount £4,725

Proposal Maya Well-being Project

The application was deferred pending further clarification from the applicant concerning the priority of proposed funding particularly concerning the cost of premises hire.

27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S MAJOR ARTS VENUES

Councillor Waddington referred to the above review and Community representatives and members of the public were handed questionnaires which asked for information concerning the use of the Council's three major arts venues. It was noted that the information gathered would support the review process.

28. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

