

Castle Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Monday, 3 February 2014

Held at: St Andrews Church Hall, Gateway Street, Leicester

Who was there:

Councillor Neil Clayton

Councillor Patrick Kitterick

Councillor Lynn Senior

40. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Senior was elected as Chair for the meeting.

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Clayton and Kitterick declared that they assisted with the organisation of the Summer Arts and Crafts Fair being the subject of a bid for grant funding. It was clarified that the Councillors assisted the Clarendon Park Traders Association with the organisation of the event on an entirely voluntary basis.

Councillor Senior declared that her partner was employed by the Council and that his role involved advice on transport matters when planning applications were being considered. She advised that she would therefore withdraw from any discussions involving future planning proposals.

Councillor Senior further declared that she was a member of the local Police Panel and that in respect of the Castle Classic Cycle Race she occupied a city centre flat.

43. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the Minutes of the meeting of the previous Castle Ward Community meeting held on 5 November 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

44. NEW WALK CENTRE DEMOLITION

Matt Wallace (New Walk Centre Project Team) and Sarah Woffenden (Demolition Project Manager) were welcomed to the meeting.

Matt and Sarah presented details of the ambitious plans the Council had concerning the redevelopment of the New Walk Centre site. He advised of the initial soft market testing and of discussions with potential developers and occupiers.

It was noted that a mixed use development of commercial, office, leisure/hotel, residential, and complementary retail use had been the significant area of interest arising from the initial discussions.

It was reported that the demolition process would entail significant enabling works, which would be undertaken following the vacation of the buildings at the end of June 2014. It was noted that these works would include:

- Structural surveys and utilities investigations
- Soft strip
- Recycling of materials, including furniture and fittings
- Relocation of substations

Having regard to the demolition itself, it was reported that three options were being considered;

- Ultra high reach
 - Used in inner city confined situations
 - Requires traffic control measures
 - Involves atomised dust suppression
- Floor by floor deconstruction
 - Full height encapsulated scaffolding
 - Mobile crane assists the lifting operations during deconstruction
- High speed implosion
 - Would involve significant publicity/communication with residents and businesses

Details of the anticipated timeline including the options for demolition/deconstruction and the likely handover to developers in 2015 were presented. It was noted that dependent on the approved use and scale of the redevelopment, works could continue late into 2017 with a completion date beyond.

The communications and engagement activities undertaken to date were described and it was confirmed that over 300 letters had been sent to local residents and businesses.

It was also confirmed that an enquiry system had been established to assist the process at NewWalkCentreQandA@leicester.gov.uk.

In conclusion, suggestions to assist the future communication of the progress of the project were requested.

Matt and Sarah were thanked for their presentation and report.

In response to questions it was confirmed that any communication to the above email address would be kept on a central database allowing for responses to be sent and regular updates to be issued. It was accepted that ten working days was an appropriate timescale to respond to email communications.

Concerns of the noise pollution from the demolition works were expressed and the experiences of the recent Marlborough House demolition were described to highlight recent problems. It was reported by residents in this regard that although

assurances had been made to the contrary, demolition works causing significant noise pollution had continued outside of normal working hours. It was therefore suggested that more adequate contract monitoring would be required for the New Walk Centre site, including an emphasis on acceptable working hours should be made part of the contract documents.

In respect of the Marlborough House site generally, it was reported that options for the marketing of the vacant site as a package together with the New Walk Centre site were being considered.

Reference was made to the costs of each option and estimates as comparisons were given, although it was stressed that the decision would not be determined by the financial implications. The preferred option would be determined following extensive consultation and analysis following the vacation of the buildings and not driven by cost.

In response to a query concerning the likely increased amount of dust from implosion and the possibility of detrimental effect on historic surrounding properties, the requirement for condition surveys of nearby properties was emphasised and acknowledged. It was reported that significant amounts of dust would occur with any of the options and that there were many examples where implosion had been used in city centres with similar circumstances to the New Walk Centre site.

It was considered that the condition surveys of surrounding properties were a key aspect of the process and it was requested that the defined radius, when known, should be reported back to a future meeting.

In discussing the future uses it was noted that the planning process would involve a separate full consultation exercise and initial thoughts on the scale of the new build were suggested. It was clear from the soft market testing that the development would involve a mix of uses and would be of a reduced scale to the aspect of the site currently, with improved open space.

The update on the project was noted.

45. LEICESTER ROYAL INFIRMARY BUILDING PROPOSAL

Mark Whiteman and Richard Kinnersley (Leicester Royal Infirmary) were welcomed to the meeting.

Mark gave details of the proposals to increase the capacity of the Accident and Emergency Department and reported of statistics showing that over 160,000 patients received treatment during the previous year and on one occasion 692 patients had been dealt with in a single day, a rate of approximately 30 each hour.

It was clear from recent experience that the current buildings and levels of service required significant devilment and improvement to meet demand.

Richard reported on the initial development plans to increase the capacity of the service including revision to the car park policies and to the physical alterations to the site. It was noted that a planning application would be submitted later in the year.

In respect of a timeline for the development, Richard advised that works were expected to commence in 2015 with a completion date for the Accident and Emergency Department occupying improved premises by the spring of 2016.

In response to questions works to the wings within the existing Victorian buildings were described and it was noted that some demolition would be required, including the chapel building.

Transport implications and traffic planning of the areas around the site were also being considered, it being noted that ambulances had reported recent difficulties in accessing the site and reports of queuing ambulances at peak times were common.

The long-term parking policies of the hospital, to reduce the need for outpatients to come to the city, were reported. It was considered that the car parking drop off points for accident and emergency use would be improved as part of those revised policies and development proposals.

The estimated cost of the new build was reported as £48m and the tendering processes to ensure procurement of local suppliers and contractors were clarified. In response to a question concerning the listed buildings on site, it was confirmed that the 1771 building would not be affected by the proposed works.

In conclusion, the situation concerning smokers using adjacent residential areas was discussed. Mark stated that the policy of the hospital was currently to not allow smoking on site and therefore staff used areas on the boundary. It was suggested that the hospital may reconsider this policy with the introduction of appropriately placed smoking areas, as the legitimate concerns of residents were acknowledged.

Mark and Richard were thanked for their attendance and report.

46. HEALTHWATCH LEICESTER

This item was deferred.

47. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY UPDATE

Councillor Kitterick reported on an Article 4 Direction which meant that following its imminent confirmation, the Direction would come into effect from August 2014, after which it would be more difficult for developers to convert properties into houses in multiple occupation.

Having regard to the previously reported issues concerning letting boards, it was noted that although powers existed to enforce their removal, agents were being

allowed one year to remove unnecessary letting boards, before those more stringent powers would be considered.

48. POLICE UPDATE

Sergeant Simon Preston updated the meeting on his activities within the Ward.

It was reported that a slight increase in burglaries from dwellings had been experienced and that various schemes and crime reduction methods, including window alarms, were being promoted. It was reported that the use of postcode markings to register valuables significantly assisted the police in their efforts and community representatives and public present were asked to consider promoting this initiative within their communities.

The theft of valuables from individuals, such as mobile phones and other electronic equipment was increasing. It was noted that this reflected the increase in technological items being carried by the public. It was suggested that the public should pay particular attention to their surroundings and be more aware of the increase in this criminal activity. The reductions in theft of cars and theft from cars were reported, due to increased security being 'designed in' to modern vehicles. It was considered that there was a correlation to the increases in other opportunist thefts from individuals of phones and electronic equipment.

Sgt Preston was thanked for his attendance and update.

49. CITY WARDEN UPDATE

Chris Bramley-Brown updated the meeting on his environmental and enforcement activities in the ward.

It was reported that significant work had been undertaken to remove fly-tips and that an initiative to enforce skip and scaffolding licences had been successful.

Residents in some streets in the ward had been reminded of their responsibilities to ensure that bins were not left on-street. The removal of A-Boards and other pavement obstructions was also being enforced.

Chris referred to recent enforcement of an unlawful fly-post, advertising a local dance club, which had led to a successful prosecution.

In conclusion, reference was made to a potential increase in the use of parking bays which were currently underused in the wider area of the hospital, similar to those in the adjacent streets which worked well. It was considered that the matter could be pursued in liaison with the hospital and parking enforcement colleagues.

Chris was thanked for this report and update.

50. WARD COMMUNITY BUDGET

The following applications for Ward funding were submitted for consideration and were determined as indicated:

- 1) Application reference 1820

Rock Salt Bin & Extra Salt (St. Andrews TARA)

SUPPORTED in the sum of £200

- 2) Application reference 1823

The Bridge Homelessness Mentoring Project

SUPPORTED in the sum of £500

- 3) Application reference 1825

Clarendon Park Traders Association for Summer Arts & Crafts Fair

SUPPORTED in the sum of £2,750

(partial funding of £499 initially, and remaining balance of £2,251 to from 2014/15 fund, subject to new funding allocation received).

- 4) Application reference 1826

St John Baptist Primary School Entrance Safety Project

SUPPORTED in the sum of £2,000

51. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CASTLE CLASSIC CYCLE RACE – 17 AUGUST 2014

Andy Salkeld (Transport Development Officer) referred to the above race and reported on the event planning currently underway. It was noted that 2014 would be the second year of the event and that early confirmation of the date meant that traffic and wider implications could be dealt with a suitable lead in period to ensure minimum disruption.

Janet Hudson (British Cycling) gave details of the classification of the race and confirmed that the top national cyclists would be competing. It was reported that the race may be broadcast on ITV4 as one of British Cycling's Grand Prix events.

It was expected that over 5000 spectators would attend the event and that other attractions would support the main race event. Partnership working with schools, colleges, sporting clubs, and businesses was referred to, with very supportive and enthusiastic initial responses being received.

Detailed information to residents and businesses would be provided nearer to the event.

Andy and Janet were thanked for the report and update.

52. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm