



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY
COMMISSION

Held: MONDAY, 26 JANUARY 2015 at 4:00 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Singh (Chair)

Councillor Dr Chowdhury Councillor Gugnani
Councillor Corral Councillor Waddington

In Attendance

Councillor Russell, Assistant City Mayor - Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Sood, Assistant City Mayor - Community Involvement, Partnerships and
Equalities

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35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bhatti and Desai.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sood declared Other Disclosable Interests in that she was Chair and Trustee of the Leicester Council of Faiths and also Patron for CLASP.

37. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission held on 13 October 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

38. LIBRARIES PRINTED MUSIC AND DRAMA SERVICE: UPDATE REPORT

The Director of Culture and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that

provided an update on work towards developing a new option for the music and drama service in Leicester and Leicestershire.

Councillor Russell, Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhood Services presented the report and explained that because the council were experiencing funding cuts, economies were needed and the printed music service was one of the areas they were looking at to make efficiencies. The service needed to be sustainable and a consultation had been undertaken with printed music and drama service subscribers. The council had also undertaken to work with Making Music in order to find a solution for a sustainable service. Approximately 25% of the groups that accessed the service were based in the city and whereas some of the groups had indicated that they would be willing to pay more for the service, some groups, particularly in the city, had said that they would find it difficult to pay an increased charge.

The concept of a regional service was being investigated by Nottingham City Council which would include options for accessing the service. There would be a consultation led by Nottingham City Council to see if this would be feasible, sustainable and would meet the needs of local groups. The options for accessing the service are being consulted on as follows:

- to collect from / return to Nottingham City Centre
- to collect from / return to elsewhere in Nottingham
- for a courier service to another area

The Chair invited Ms Barbara Eifler, Executive Director of Making Music, to address the commission. Ms Eifler made a number of points including the following:

- the inter library loans were very important to the groups that belonged to Making Music as they sourced approximately 70% of their music through their local library. The remaining 30% were borrowed through inter library loans. There were therefore concerns relating to accessibility as it would not be possible for their members to travel far.
- As well as the need to access sufficient copies of music, the other main concern was relating to the ability to book music in advance.
- It was acknowledged that only approximately 25% of registered users lived in the city, however the commission was asked to note that user groups may be city based.
- The commission was asked to consider whether a local solution would be preferable as an alternative to a new Nottingham model.
- The groups would be willing to contribute financially to keeping this service so that it would continue to be delivered by the local authority and available locally.

Assistant City Mayor Russell explained that the council wanted to look at as many different options as possible in order to find a long term solution, but at the same time it was necessary to balance the needs of people in the city with those from outside Leicester, as people from as far away as Cambridge accessed the service. The Head of Libraries and Information Services added that the service placed a particular demand on staff, in particular because of the time it could take to find sufficient copies of music for larger groups such as choirs.

RESOLVED:

that the commission note the report and that Nottingham City Council were due to carry out market research in February 2015

39. NEW HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE UPDATE REPORT

The Waste Service Manager gave a presentation on the Gypsum Close Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), and a copy of this presentation is attached at the end of these minutes.

Members noted that the plans included a Reuse Shop; this would be run by a charity which would pay rent to the council and raise money for itself by selling donated items. The site would also include provision for members of the public to donate unwanted items to the Leicester City Council's Pass It On Scheme.

The site would include weighbridges near to the entrance and the exit, so it would be known how much trade and commercial waste had been disposed of and an appropriate charge raised accordingly. This would bring in an income stream to the council, although it was difficult to estimate how much this would be. There would however be different charges for the different kinds of waste.

Members queried the name for the Reuse Shop and were advised that once the tendering process was complete, the council would work with whichever charity had won the contract to agree on a name. The shop however, would contain the name of the charity, but it was also hoped that the name would include the term 'reuse' or something similar as the public were familiar with the terms 'reduce, reuse and recycle'.

The site was on target to open in spring 2015 and members requested that they be given an opportunity to visit the site prior to its opening.

It was noted that funding for the new HWRC had come from a government grant in recognition that Leicester had continued with its weekly refuse collection. A member commented that the council should be proud of the fact that they had been able to maintain the weekly collections.

The Chair concluded the discussion and stated that he welcomed the HWRC and that it would be a significant facility in the city.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted.

40. WELFARE REFORM UPDATE

The Director of Finance submitted a report that provided an update as to the welfare reform initiatives which impacted locally, current benefits performance statistics and future developments.

Assistant City Mayor Russell commented that the council were in a position of very limited control but they did what they could to mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable.

The Head of Revenue and Benefits presented the report and explained that the second 'tranche' of the Universal Credit roll out across the country had just recently been announced, but Leicester was not included in that 'tranche'. The city would however see some universal credit claimants if they moved to Leicester from another area.

Members considered the impact of the benefit cap as the number of households affected by this reform had increased. They questioned what could be done to help people in this group and concerns were expressed about children who were living in abject poverty. Views were expressed that those children would be disadvantaged in their future prospects. The Head of Revenue and Benefits responded that they were working to identify the families that were in this group. 27% of the discretionary housing budget had been awarded to homes affected by this reform.

Members considered the Community Support Grant (CSG) and Assistant City Mayor Russell explained that an element of this grant was being used to fund the Pass It On Scheme. Members heard that the feedback from customers illustrated that they were really pleased with the service. Members noted that 1055 people had been refused the CSG in 2013/14 and queried the reasons for this. The Head of Revenue and Benefits explained that some applications would have been refused because insufficient information had been submitted so the need for support had not been demonstrated. However an Appeals Officer was looking into those refusals to make sure that the correct decision had been made. Refusals may also have been made because the Department of Work and Pensions offered support which was more appropriate.

The Chair stated that it would be useful to have further information on the process for agreeing or rejecting applications for the CSG and suggested that a small group of councillors could meet to consider this further. This matter could then be referred to the Overview Select Committee. A comment was made that as the CSG scheme was 'in house', there was some flexibility to change the criteria rules if necessary.

Concern was expressed that people might not know how to apply for help from the CSG. Assistant City Mayor Russell responded that there were a number of advice providers in the City and various organisations could give out crisis vouchers where appropriate.

Members were advised that there had been a Local Government Final Settlement 2015/16 Consultation to which the City Mayor had recently responded. At the request of the commission, it was agreed that the Scrutiny Policy Officer would circulate this response to commission members.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the report be noted; and
- 2) that a meeting be arranged with a small group of members to consider the process of agreeing or rejecting the Community Support Grant.

41. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION (LOCAL) SCHEME A YEAR ON (INCLUDING EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REVIEW)

The Head of Finance submitted a report that summarised the impact of the Local Council Tax Reduction scheme after one year in operation and which also reviewed its Equality Impact Assessment on protected groups.

The Head of Revenue and Benefits presented the report and explained that any changes to the scheme would need to be approved at full council. Members requested that if there were to be changes to the scheme, the commission should be given an opportunity to scrutinise them first.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted.

42. WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission Work Programme for 2014/15. No changes to the work programme were requested.

RESOLVED:

that the scrutiny commission's work programme be noted.


43. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.00 pm.


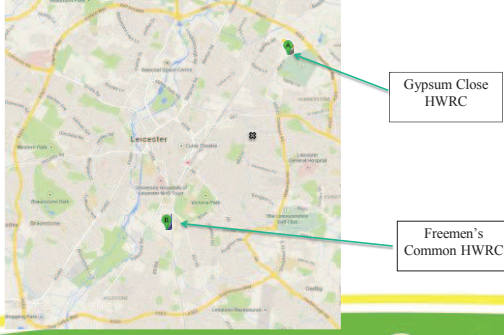
Gypsum Close HWRC (Household Waste Recycling Centre)

Progress Report January 2015


Geoff Soden




Gypsum Close / Freeman's Common – site location





Gypsum Close – site location



Address:
Household Waste
Recycling Centre, 5
Gypsum Close, LE4
9AB.
UPRN: 2465187760



Gypsum Close – schematic




Site entrance





Weighbridge

In (below)



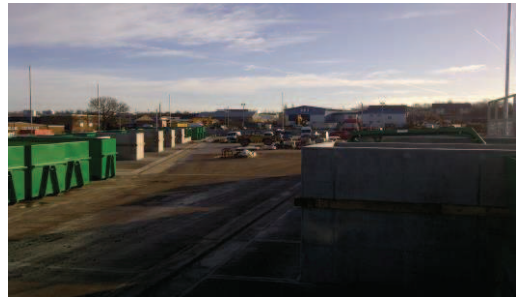
Out (above)



Trade / Commercial Waste



Service Yard



Reuse Shop



Canopy area (Oil, Paint etc.)



Household Waste (customer side)



Household Waste (service yard side)



Report summary

- On target to open in Spring 2015
- Specific opening date tbc (dependant on permit application and recruitment)
- Communications plan is being drawn up
 - Intention to promote the reuse shop, commercial waste disposal and the HWRC (Household Waste Recycling Centre) in one all encompassing campaign
- Reuse Shop; decision on charity partner to run the shop is due mid Jan 2015



Any questions?

Geoff Soden
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Site opening hours to the maximum of one shift at all times.

Opening hours	April to October*
8:00am to 4:00pm	8:00am to 4:00pm
*Closed on the 26th (Boxing Day) and 27th (New Year's Eve)	

This site is open daily except for Christmas Eve (being Day and New Year's Day) and will also close on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve at 2pm.

Household waste only

- Commercial material is accepted but must be booked in before visiting. Please call 0116 454 6732 to arrange.
- All loads over 40 tons require a permit to visit this site. Please call 0116 454 6732 to apply for a permit.

Children and animals must never enter the site or adjacent:

- Suitable footwear must be worn at all times.
- CCTV and Automatic Number Plate recognition in operation.
- If you require assistance, please speak to the site staff.
- Please read your responsibilities to visiting the site and recycle on this page.

No smoking

- Do not exceed the site speed limit of 50mph.
- Pedestrian access is not allowed.
- Do not walk waste onto site.
- Assume a dog or basket of the site rules may be asked to leave.
- If you do not have a permit you will NOT be allowed to go.

License no. 079. This site is licensed and operated by



