

NORTH WEST (INNER) AREA COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 28TH OCTOBER, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor B Chastney in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, B Atha, S Bentley, P Ewens,
M Hamilton, J Illingworth, J Matthews, J Monaghan and
L Yeadon.

APOLOGIES: Councillor J Chapman

OFFICERS: Jason Singh, Acting West North West Area Manager
Chris Dickinson, West North West Area Management
Lynne Hamshaw, West North West Homes ALMO
Ryan Platten, Community Planner
Giles Jeffs, Environment and Neighbourhoods
Stacey Campbell, Environment and Neighbourhoods
Zahid Butt, Community Safety Co-ordinator
Sgt Peter Tiernan, West Yorkshire Police
Mike Earle, Democratic Services

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Tara Cleveland, Royal Park Community Consortium
Jake England-Johns, Royal Park Community Consortium
C Coleman, Royal Park Community Consortium
David Santa Maria, Royal Park Community Consortium
Lauren Frances Hill, Leeds University Union
Jo Johnson, Leeds Met Students Union
R Tyler, Leeds HMO Lobby
M Aslam, EWK
J Baron, Guardian, Leeds
P Bainbridge, Cardigan Centre
Sue Holmes, Leeds Met
M Souater, NHPNA
John Dickinson, Weetwood Residents' Association
Jessica Biddle, University Union, Central Headingley
Community Rep
Maddy Hale, University Union, Far Headingley Community
Rep
Jon Vernon, University Union, South Headingley Community
Rep
Paul Gold, LVV
Sue Buckle, South Headingley Community Association and
Friends of Woodhouse Moor
Steve Harris, Local Resident
M Latif, Woodsley Road Resident
M Saddiq, Woodsley Road Resident
Alex Tyson, Local Resident
David Salinger, Local Resident

29 Declarations of Interest

The following personal declarations of interest were made:-

- Councillors B Chastney and J Illingworth – Agenda Item 14 (Minute No. 40 refers) – Grounds Maintenance Update Report – in their capacities as Director of West North West Homes ALMO and member of the ALMO Inner North West Area Panel, respectively.

(See also later Minute No. 34).

- Councillors J Akhtar, B Chastney and J Matthews stated that they were all Members of the Plans Panel West, and made a general statement relating to pre-determination in respect of any planning issues which might be discussed at tonight's meeting, e.g. Leeds Girls High School site. They stated that they would remain in the meeting and listen to the discussions on any planning matters, but would not take part in any discussion or voting on those matters. In order to avoid any perception of pre-determination, they stated that they would not be bound by any discussion at, or decisions taken by, the Area Committee on any planning matters, but would consider all representations and viewpoints presented at any Plans Panel meeting before reaching a conclusion based on the merits of the case.

30 Apology for Absence

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor J Chapman.

31 Open Forum

In accordance with Paragraphs 6.24 and 6.25 of the Area Committee Procedure Rules, the Chair allowed a period of up to 10 minutes for members of the public to make representations or to ask questions on matters which fell within the remit of the Area Committee.

a) Houses in Multiple Occupation

Further to Minute No.19(b) of the meeting held on 23rd September 2010, Dr Richard Tyler updated the meeting on developments in respect of proposed changes to HMO legislation.

The application for Judicial Review recently submitted by Milton Keynes Council had been refused. However, an oral appeal hearing was now being sought, but no date had yet been fixed.

Two Early Day Motions had been submitted in the Commons, both containing 30+ signatures, seeking revocation of the Government's latest proposals. However, realistically, there was little chance of these

succeeding. An All-Party Parliamentary Group had also requested a meeting with Housing Minister, Grant Shapps, which might take place as early as today. In the meantime, a Ministerial Statement by Grant Shapps relating to Article 4 Directions had later been contradicted by civil servants.

Dr Tyler raised two concerns. Leeds City Council had supplied information in support of Milton Keynes application, but, presently, Milton Keynes was having to fund the action. Dr Tyler suggested that, via the Area Committee, Leeds City Council should be requested to consider contributing towards Milton Keynes costs.

In the event of Milton Keynes' action being unsuccessful, Leeds City Council also needed its own fall-back situation, in terms of setting in train its own Article 4 Direction.

The Chair indicated that Members were in discussion with relevant Council officers on this issue, and he would make contact with the relevant senior Planning Officers, in his capacity as Chair, to raise these two specific issues. Dr Tyler was thanked for keeping the Committee informed.

In the meantime, it was noted that the proposed report to the Area Committee on the possible impact in Leeds of the new HMO legislation had been postponed until the December Area Committee meeting, by which time it was hoped that further information would have been made available by the Government. Following the last meeting, a letter had been sent to Grant Shapps, outlining the Committee's concerns.

b) Royal Park School

Further to Minute No.19(f), 23rd September 2010, Tara Cleveland, Royal Park Community Consortium, updated the Committee on the current situation regarding the former school.

The Consortium had established a website – www.royalparkschool.org. The yard had been cleared in a community exercise, and although a Community Builders grant bid, to fund a feasibility study, had been unsuccessful, nevertheless two freelance Development Workers had been engaged part-time, and it was planned to still proceed with the feasibility study. In the meantime, there were holes in the roof, and thefts of equipment and fittings from inside the building continued. Was there any more that the Council was prepared to do in terms of weather-proofing the building or security patrols? Any support the Police could lend in terms of including the site in routine patrols would also be appreciated.

The Chair indicated that the Acting Area Manager had brought the Committee's concerns to the attention of the Council's Asset Management team, and would do so again.

Members expressed concern at the Council's perceived inaction, not only in this case, but in other similar cases, where empty buildings were seemingly simply left to deteriorate until, ultimately, demolition was the only solution. It was suggested that a Scrutiny Board Inquiry or Internal Audit inquiry was necessary to investigate the Council's policy and alleged poor track record, and to effect change. It was also suggested that the Council's internal security service, Red Hall Security Services, should be used to provide security at the Royal Park School site – if necessary with possible funding from the Area Committee.

The Chair agreed to write regarding the suggested Scrutiny Board or Internal Audit inquiry. It was also agreed that the Acting Area Manager should investigate the suggestion of possibly using Red Hall Security Services in respect of this site, and the costs, and report back to the next meeting.

c) Leeds Girls High School

Further to Minute No.19(g), 23rd September 2010, Sue Buckle, South Headingley Community Association and Friends of Woodhouse Moor, reported that this issue was back on the agenda for the Plans Panel West meeting on 4th November 2010, with an officers' recommendation that, subject to reserved matters, the development application be approved. She urged people to make representations and as many people as possible to attend the meeting, even if they were only a silent presence.

Several Members expressed dissatisfaction with the manner in which this application had allegedly been managed by planning officers, the content of the reports to the Plans Panel, and the alleged superficial considerations given, and weight attached, to issues which Local Members and the public regarded merited greater consideration in the overall scheme of the application. It was again suggested that this should be subject to a Scrutiny Board Inquiry. In the meantime, two Headingley Members stated that they had written to the Chief Executive on these issues.

- d) A local resident raised an issue regarding parking restrictions in Woodsley Road. He was requested to leave his details with the Area Management Officer, and he could then be invited to attend the next Transport Sub-Group meeting. Alternatively, he could, if he wished, raise the matter direct with one of his Ward Councillors.

32 Minutes - 23rd September 2010

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

33 Matters Arising from the Minutes

a) West Park Centre (Minute No. 21(a) refers)

Chris Dickinson, Area Management Officer, reported that, following the last meeting, the Leader of the Council had been made aware of the Area Committee's continuing concerns, but dates had not yet been set for the consultation exercise regarding this site.

Concerns were expressed regarding the possibility of this site turning into another Royal Park School scenario, unless the Council was careful.

It was reported that the West Park Residents' Association was already active in terms of preparing a business plan for the possible future use of this asset.

b) Royal Park School (Minute No.19 (f)refers)

It was reported that Headingley Ward Members had not received a response to two requests for a meeting with Councillor R Lewis, Executive Member (Development and Regeneration). The Chair offered to pursue this separately on their behalf, if so requested.

It was noted that John Ramsden, Asset Management, was planning to hold a briefing for Hyde Park and Woodhouse Ward Members shortly, after which a position statement would be submitted to the December Area Committee meeting.

A general discussion ensued regarding the desirability of all North West Inner Area Committee Members sharing information and being kept informed and up to date on current issues, such as this item and other matters of general interest or concern which affected more than one Ward, e.g., HMO matters.

c) Airport Noise – Weetwood Residents (Minute No.19(h) refers)

Further to Minute No. 19(h), 23rd September 2010, it was reported that previously expressed concerns regarding the nature of the public consultation exercise on the Airport's Noise Action Plan had been shared with the Airport's management. They had responded by outlining the scope of the consultation and the number of respondents – 97. Airport management had indicated that the consultation had been conducted within the necessary regulations, the results and the Noise Action Plan had now been forwarded to DEFRA for approval, and they had no plans to re-open the consultation.

Councillor Illingworth expressed his dissatisfaction at this response. In his opinion, the Area Committee should write to DEFRA, requesting that the consultation exercise be re-run.

The Chair stated that he accepted that the Plans Panel West, which received regular update reports on the operation of the Airport, needed to keep a watching brief on this issue.

It was reported that the Council could impose fines on the Airport if the noise restrictions were breached, but it was understood that no fines had been imposed to date.

d) Health and Wellbeing Partnership (Minute No. 26 refers)

Councillor Yeadon reported on a recent partnership meeting she had attended in her role as Area Committee Health and Wellbeing 'Champion'. It was clear that the implications of the Government's White Paper on NHS reform was a greater hands-on role for local authorities, and she suggested that the Area Committee consider establishing a Health Sub-Group, alongside the other existing theme based Sub-Groups.

The Chair agreed that this was worthy of further consideration, perhaps when the implications of the White Paper became clearer.

e) Children's Services (Minute No. 25 refers)

At the suggestion of a Member, it was agreed that the Acting Area Manager, in consultation with the Chair, should investigate how young people, perhaps via the Leeds Youth Council, could be encouraged to participate in the activities of the Area Committee.

f) Wellbeing Fund 2010/11 (Minute No. 22 refers)

Further to Minute No. 22, 23rd September 2010, reference was made to the Small Grant of £499.85 to the Leeds University Union to assist with a waste and recycling education scheme. A Member stated that the distribution of literature/bin stickers, possibly using students under the instruction of Streetscene Services, allied to the change in collection days, had led to bins being incorrectly stickered and absolute chaos in parts of some Wards.

The Acting Area Manager was requested to undertake some investigation and to report back on his findings.

34 Well-Being Fund 2010/11 - Update Report

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report updating the Committee on the latest position regarding its revenue and capital Wellbeing Budgets 2010/11, and requesting the Committee to consider a

Small Grant application in respect of a proposed 'Year of the Volunteer' celebration event, scheduled to take place on 9th November 2010.

With regard to the Small Grant application, Members felt that they needed more information before they could agree the request, whilst a view was expressed from the floor of the meeting that the money would be better spent on something else, such as support for the Royal Park Community Consortium.

Councillor B Atha moved a proposition, seconded by Councillor J Akhtar, that a Small Grant of £500 (or, if necessary £1,000 – to match the other local Area Committees) be approved in respect of the proposed 'Year of the Volunteer' event.

However, after further discussion and consideration of this item, Councillor Atha, with the consent of Councillor Akhtar, withdrew his proposition in favour of the one recorded below.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) That this Committee notes the new balance of the Well-being budget, capital and revenue in accordance with the report now submitted.
- c) That a decision regarding the request to provide £500 (or £1,000) from the Wellbeing Small Grant budget for a 'Year of the Volunteer' celebration event on 9th November 2010 be deferred for further details to be circulated separately to Members. In view of the timescale, the Acting Area Manager be requested to, if necessary, take a delegated decision, in consultation with the Chair, following further Member discussion, and to report back to the next meeting.

(NB: Councillor L Yeadon declared a personal interest in this item in her capacity as 'Year of the Volunteer' Member Champion.)

35 Community Planner Update

Ryan Platten, Inner North West Community Planning Officer (CPO), presented a report updating the Committee regarding the nature and scope of his work and responded to Members' queries and comments.

In brief summary, the main points of discussion were :-

- The excellent work being carried out by the Inner North West Community Planning Officer – Ryan Platten was congratulated by the Committee.

- Joined-Up Working – Reference was made to Paragraph 3.4 of the report. The theme of joined-up working across Council services was a principle which needed to be improved and expanded upon in terms of all services, not just on planning matters.
- It was perceived that to date, a lot of the Community Planning Officer's time and efforts had been concentrated in Wards other than Kirkstall. Kirkstall had its own unique issues which would benefit from input from the CPO. The CPO re-iterated that he was an Area Committee resource, and was available to provide support and advice across all four Wards;
- One such issue was an improvement to the Kirkstall District Centre, which, for various reasons, had deteriorated and suffered from lack of investment over the years. It was agreed that this should be referred to the next meeting of the Area Committee's Planning Sub-Group.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report be noted.
- b) That approval be given to the recommendation that the Community Planner resource be continued to be used to meet the objectives as outlined in Section 2.3 of the report, whilst also looking to respond to the new challenges as discussed in Sections 6.2 and 6.3.

36 Key Messages from Area Committee Sub Groups and Forums

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted a report regarding key messages from recent meetings of the Area Committee's Sub-Groups or Community Forums.

- It was reported that the next meeting of the Transport Sub-Group would be in early December and, as with all the Sub-Groups, local residents were welcome to attend and put across their point of view.
- Hyde Park and Woodhouse Forum, 28th September 2010 – with reference to Paragraph 6.4 of the report, and the Forum request that a Hyde Park and Woodhouse Member be nominated to sit on the City Centre Plans Panel, a Member stated that, in fact, until recently, Councillor G Harper had been on the City Centre Plans Panel, but had subsequently been replaced, to the Member's belief, due to his non-attendance at meetings.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

37 Annual Community Safety Report 2010

Zahid Butt, Area Community Safety Co-ordinator, assisted by Sergeant Peter Tiernan, presented the Annual Report 2010 of the Divisional Community Safety Partnership, and both responded to Members' queries and comments.

In brief summary, the main points of discussion were:-

- A plea for the resurrection of regular (quarterly) meetings between the Police and Ward Members which, ideally, should be organised at Area Committee level, rather than wedge-based.
- The fact that the PACT meetings (Police and Community Together) now took place in conjunction with pre-arranged Community Forum meetings, to avoid people having to attend two separate meetings. This was accepted as a good idea.
- Late night/early morning anti-social behaviour in Headingley Ward and other areas. In answer to a Members' query it was confirmed that in mid-week, PCSOs shifts ended at midnight. However, they were extended to 3.00 am at week-ends, thereby providing a visible uniformed presence.
- A plea for the Police to get more involved in late-night alcohol licensing applications in the hope that their views might carry more weight with the Licensing Committee.
- A potential gap in respect of the enforcement of noise nuisance legislation. This was no longer a Police responsibility, but a discretionary power of local authorities. Residents found this frustrating. The question was posed regarding whether the Council had adequate resources available to effectively tackle the nuisance. It was suggested that this be the subject of further discussion at Ward Member meetings.
- Zahid Butt was congratulated regarding a recent community cohesion event held in Hyde Park and Woodhouse Ward.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above comments, the report be received and noted.

38 Health and Environmental Action Service - Update Report

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted an update report regarding the operation of the HEAS across the City, containing statistical and enforcement information broken down on a Ward by Ward basis.

Stacey Campbell, Health and Environmental Action Service, presented the report and responded to Members' queries and comments. In brief summary, the main points of discussion were:-

- Graffiti – It was confirmed that responsibility for graffiti removal was through the Streetscene Service (Frieda Haley).
- A decrease in the number of nuisance vehicles being used as advertising hoardings, particularly in the Kirkstall Ward;
- Fly-posting and leaflet drops – Streetscene Services do clean up the aftermath of any publicity leaflet drop, say targeted at students in Headingley Ward, and the Environmental Action Team managers will liaise with Streetscene managers to exchange information with a view to considering enforcement action against any offenders. Streetsites, who managed the drum flyposting advertising scheme, cleaned up any flyposting litter in the vicinity of the drums, and did pass information onto the Environmental Action Teams;
- Environmental Action Teams investigated domestic noise complaints, and HEAS did provide an out of hours service, but this was not a 24 hour service:
- Drain clearance and Autumn leaf clearance – Stacey Campbell undertook to pass on Members' concerns to Streetscene Services.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the above comments, the report be received and noted.

39 Briefing Note on Proposed Delegation of Elements of the Streetscene Service

Following consideration of the matter at the Area Committee Chairs' Forum on 8th October 2010, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods submitted an information report regarding proposals for elements of the Streetscene Service (street cleaning, litter bins, graffiti removal and fly-tipping) to be delegated to Area Committees. This would provide Area Committees with the opportunity to shape, control and steer these services in their areas.

The proposals would involve each Area Committee negotiating a local Service Level Agreement with Streetscene Services and, to assist and guide this process, it was proposed that the District Local Environmental Quality Survey (DLEQS) system, devised by the Keep Britain Tidy Group, be utilised.

In brief summary, the main points of discussion were:-

- In receiving the report, some Members expressed reservations regarding the proposal. Fundamentally, was this the right way to organise this service, on a piecemeal basis, with all the problems associated with trying to allocate resources on a needs-led basis across the wedge? Consistency of standards on a City-wide basis was regarded as the key factor, with officers held responsible for performance. Reservations were also expressed regarding the appropriateness, or otherwise, of using the DLEQS system to inform

Service Level Agreements. Some Member also regarded local control over refuse collection and waste recycling as essential elements, yet these had been specifically excluded from the proposals.

- Other Members, however, broadly welcomed the proposals, and the opportunity provided to prioritise different issues in different areas. The amount of delegated resources, and their deployment, was regarded as crucial to the success of such a scheme.

RESOLVED –

- a) That, at this stage, the report be received and noted.
- b) That further information be made available in due course to the Environment Sub-Group and the Area Committee in order that more detailed consideration can be given to the proposal.

40 Grounds Maintenance Contract - Update Report

The Chief Environmental Services Officer submitted a report updating the Committee regarding the implementation of the new Grounds Maintenance Contract with effect from 1st January 2012.

In attendance at the meeting, and responding to Members' queries and comments, was Giles Jeffs, Environment and Neighbourhoods. In brief summary, the main points of discussion were:-

- The opportunity presented by the letting of a new contract to engage a local social enterprise company, such as Groundwork Leeds, with all the spin-off benefits in terms of local employment, apprenticeships, etc. It was accepted that the Council needed to demonstrate value for money, but this need not be an obstacle to engaging a social enterprise company, especially when other matters were factored in.
- Reference was also made as to whether the Parks and Countryside Division would be likely to submit an in-house bid, or, indeed, whether or not they still had the staff and equipment to successfully bid. Private enterprise was not always necessarily the best or cheapest solution, and the view was expressed that the Parks and Countryside Division had previously performed the task at least as well, if not better, than the current contractor.

Giles Jeffs responded to the effect that the Parks and Countryside Division had prepared a contingency plan in the event that the present contractor had not agreed to a 10 month extension to their existing contract, and no doubt this contingency plan would be the immediate fall-back situation in the event of a contractor defaulting or proving to be so unsatisfactory that the contract was ended. He was not in a position to comment regarding whether or not the Parks and

Countryside Division would submit a tender, or, indeed, were geared up to put in such a bid.

- Reference was also made to whether or not certain parts of the City, e.g. Headingley, which had little green space, could opt out of the contract and make its own arrangements.

Giles Jeffs responded by referring to the opportunities for local Town and Parish Councils to bid to do the work in their particular areas, although it was more likely that they would opt for Option 2 – to be part of the formal monitoring process, rather than do the work themselves. In terms of any other possible alternatives, he would have to refer the query to the Programme Board.

RESOLVED –

- a) That subject to the above comments, the report be received and noted.
- b) That Giles Jeffs report the Area Committee's views and queries back to the Grounds Maintenance Programme Board, and a response be submitted to the next Area Committee meeting.

41 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday, 16th December 2010, 7.00 pm, Lewis Jones Suite, Headingley Carnegie Stadium, St Michael's Lane, Headingley, LS6 3BR.

The meeting concluded at 8.57 pm.