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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 5th June 2014

Agenda

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Guest Speaker- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer, Childrens Services, Leeds City Council**
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 1st May 2014**
- 5. Police Report**
- 6. Report of the subgroup dealing with a Neighbourhood Plan for Beeston**
- 7. Report of Committee meeting held on Thursday 15th May 2014**
- 8. Beeston Festival**
- 9. Correspondence**
- 10. Any Other Business**

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 1st May 2014

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr R. Almond, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs S. Burton, Mrs. M. Cook, Mrs. M. Dinsdale, Mr. J. Fenton, Councillor A. Gabriel, M. Hobson, Mr. J. Hook, Miss P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, Miss E. Newton, Councillor A. Ogilvie, Mr M. Parry, Rev. L. Pearson, Mr. F. Swift, Mr. G. Turton and Mr.R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting and observed that the weather was like winter.
2. Apologies for absence were received from James Adamson, Councillor David Congreve and John Hodgson
3. Guest Speaker- Christine Thornton introduced James Bailey, the Centre Director for the White Rose Centre
 - 3.1 James Bailey thanked the Forum for its invitation and noted that his colleague Dean Stratton, who had attended a previous Forum meeting as a guest speaker, looks after the day to day management of the centre whereas his role, as centre manager is more strategic. He noted that he is responsible for the delivery of the business plan and the business objectives of the centre. He noted that he comes from Northampton, and has worked in five shopping centres across the country for 15 years. He added that he is in his first six months at the White Rose Centre, his children had started school and that he has received a 'lovely welcome' from the team, as well as customers and retailers at the White Rose Centre. He noted that there is a community spirit at the centre, and a large amount of pride in the shopping centre. He emphasised that this is not his shopping centre, but your shopping centre. He emphasised the importance of listening to customers and seeing what their requirements are. If customers are not listened to, the good work which had been undertaken over the past 15 to 16 years will be wasted.

James Bailey said that there had been some physical changes at the White Rose centre. The food court refurbishment had taken place

and the toilets are now open. The quiet room, which is important to some customers had reopened. This represents a massive improvement. There is also improved baby feeding and changing. There are a number of new restaurants; Prezzo, Wok and Go, Primos Hot Dogs, and the Hand Made Burger Company. James Bailey hoped that the new Subway store would be completed tonight, whilst Coffee creations is following. James Bailey noted that stores in the White Rose Centre are 100% let, and that there is an incredible amount of interest from traders wishing to take space in the centre. This is a healthy position, and the centre has had a positive year during which it has outperformed national trends in terms of customers in terms of visitors and sales growth. Retailers are happy. James Bailey added that there is a strong Corporate Responsibility programme, aimed at ensuring that the centre did things in the right way.

James Bailey explained that the centre is just about to have five beehives installed on the roofs of the centre, in what he described as an interesting project. He noted that although the world has a huge dependency on bees in terms of food production. The hives will house 150000 bees, and James Bailey noted that he is training as a beekeeper. The bees will have no impact on customers of the centre

James Bailey noted that the nominated National Charity for Land Securities, which owns the White Rose Centre is MENCAP, whilst the local charity partner for the White Rose Centre is the Hunslet Club, which undertakes work with people with a range of ages, needs and requirements.

James Bailey noted that the White Rose Centre undertakes a large waste recycling programme. The aim is to divert all the waste produced by the centre from landfill. 66 % of waste is recycled and the aim is to raise this figure to 80%. He added that the centre is seeking to combat youth unemployment. To this end, there are four apprentices working in the Shopping Centre, giving young people an opportunity and a great experience. He also noted that a young man associated with the Meanwood Valley Farm with challenges in life had been given a job lasting three days per week. He was fired up, and wants to be given a chance, but had no previous work experience. It was noted that the planned extension to the White Rose Centre will create 1000 jobs.

3.2 The meeting then opened up to questions from the floor. Amongst the issues raised were the beehives, what would happen to the honey produced, the timescale for the completion of the entrance to the centre, the timing and route of bus services to the centre, particularly in the light of the introduction of the cinema, the role of apprentices at the centre, details of shops which might occupy the centre, whether more seating would be provided in the eating area of the centre and whether a market would be introduced at the centre.

4. Minutes of the Forum meeting held on Thursday 3rd April.

4.1 Robert Winfield acknowledged that the surname of Dean Stratton, who was expected to be a guest speaker at the time the agenda was prepared, but in the event was not a guest speaker, had been misspelled. This would be corrected before the minutes are posted on the internet.

4.2 It was noted that Councillors David Congreve, and Angela Gabriel and Edna Newton attended the meeting, despite their names not having been included in the list of those attending

4.3 Councillor Angela Gabriel referred to a passage in paragraph 9 of the minutes, in which it was stated that she had expressed strong opposition to an idea put forward by the Head Teacher of Hugh Gaitskell School to convert Beeston Village Community Centre into a nursery for two year olds. She emphasised that this idea was opposed by all the councillors but felt that the minutes, as drafted might convey the misleading impression that the other councillors were not opposed to the idea. Robert Winfield pointed out that he would be happy to accept this alteration and added that when minutes are amended, the minutes and agenda document is posted on the internet with the amendments made in red.

4.4 Subject to these matters, the minutes were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting.

5. Police Report- It was noted that no police were present at the meeting

6. Report of Subgroup Dealing with a neighbourhood plan for Beeston. Greg Turton noted that a membership list for the Neighbourhood Forum was being circulated amongst the audience. He noted that adding an individual's name to the form would not involve making a commitment, but would indicate an interest in debating the issues raised by the consultation process. However, when a document is submitted to apply for the designation of the Neighbourhood Forum, we would be required to include a membership list. Residents, and people working or carrying on business in the area can apply for membership. A neighbourhood Forum is required by the relevant legislation to have a minimum of 21 members. Christine Thornton noted that indicating an interest in the Neighbourhood Forum is not compulsory

Greg Turton pointed out that a grant award of £2940 had been confirmed by Locality. The grant has been signed for but as the Beeston Community Forum is not an incorporated body, we are not able to hold the funds ourselves. Leeds City Council will hold the money on our behalf, with Greg Turton and Mark Parry as signatories. Greg Turton added that a project plan has been drawn up. The first stages of the plan have already been implemented. The project plan sets out the order in which tasks must be completed together with the timescale. Greg Turton thanked Mark Parry for preparing the plan.

Greg Turton said that we are in the final stages of the production of the leaflet. He would like the leaflet to be printed as soon as possible and hoped that committee members present would be able to join him for a two minute session to finalise the content of the leaflet. The

designer of the leaflet will arrange for printing at best value. Letters to schools, voluntary organisations and businesses were also being finalised. The next meeting of the subgroup, on 8th May, would agree the text of these. The letters will enclose a copy of a leaflet and a copy of a poster. The stall at the forthcoming Beeston Festival would promote the neighbourhood plan. It is intended to engage with those attending the festival to tell them about the benefits of the plan. Christine Thornton observed that a considerable amount of progress had been made on the plan. The leaflets will be circulated to all local households so that everyone will know about the plan. Mary Dinsdale asked how the leaflets would be distributed. Greg Turton noted that the leaflets would be distributed by a professional company and the costs involved had been included in the budget. We had not yet selected the company, but have obtained a number of quotes. It was noted that the Royal Mail required a minimum spend of £5000. It was intended to check that everything has gone to plan. Christine Thornton noted that volunteers might be required at a later stage to deliver flyers. Greg Turton noted that the designer of the leaflet holds a Masters degree in design.

7. Report of Committee meeting held on 17th April 2014. Christine Thornton noted that the committee had considered the Neighbourhood Plan (the detailed points had been dealt with in the previous agenda item) as well as a letter from Bill Birch advocating that affordable housing should be built on the site of the former Ice Pak factory on Barkly Road. It was noted that Bill Birch intended that the letter, or some amended version of it, would be sent by the Forum to the Leeds City Council Planning Department. The letter noted that the exact site has already been allocated by Leeds City Council as part of its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA Site 481). Using Leeds City Council's own methodology, the area in question would be able to support the following number of dwellings; 0.51 hectares, multiplied by the density multiplier (65) multiplied by the net ratio ; 0.9 , gives a site capacity of 30. Bill Birch added that if all the land bounded by Barkly Road, the ginnel from Barkly Road to Firth Road, Firth Road, and the ginnel from Wooler Avenue to Barkly Road was included, the increased area would be able to support the following number of dwellings; 1.14 hectares, multiplied by the density multiplier 65, multiplied by the net ratio 65 giving a site capacity of 67. The letter urges Leeds City Council to release the entire area for affordable homes. A discussion took place about Bill Birch's letter. Christine Thornton noted that the site is owned by Aspiring Communities. The site had been allocated for housing before it was purchased by Aspiring Communities. As the land is now owned by Aspiring Communities, they can do what they want with the site, subject to planning permission. Christine Thornton noted that the Committee had decided that the matter be referred to the Forum. She noted that Bill Birch is, in addition to his involvement with the Forum involved with the Beeston Campaign for Affordable Housing. Councillor Angela Gabriel acknowledged that she is not a planning expert, but added that she cannot see how Leeds City Council can compel owners of land to do what the Council wants to do with the land. In particular, Leeds City Council cannot insist that the owner of land builds housing on the land. She noted that Ice Pak had sold the site with planning permission for housing in order to make it more lucrative, but the buyer of the land is under no obligation to develop the land in line with such consent

Greg Turton noted that there is a requirement for 70000 houses in Leeds over the next 14 years. A number of sites, including the Ice Pak site had been identified for possible housing development. A large number of objectors to the proposals by Aspiring Communities indicated that they would prefer the site to be developed for housing. Additionally, the Beeston Forum's letter of objection stated that it would prefer the site to be developed for housing. Greg Turton felt that there should be some consideration of the housing needs of Beeston and whether these can be realised by building houses on this site. Greg Turton added that he is aware that the site of the Cardboard Box Company at the bottom end of the road is up for sale. He noted that this site would be attractive to a developer. Christine Thornton noted that there are two businesses in between the two sites. Rev Lindsey Pearson wondered whether anyone has expressed an interest in building houses on the site, if it has had outline planning permission for housing for a long time. Christine Thornton was not aware of any such interest, but she did not know why no such interest had been expressed. Lindsey Pearson asked whether anyone is currently interested in building houses on the site. Councillor Adam Ogilvie said that there is no such interest, as the site is owned by Aspiring Communities. Christine Thornton observed that if Aspiring Communities had wished to build houses, they could have done. Lindsey Pearson said that if no one is interested in building houses, our views about the matter are irrelevant. Councillor Angela Gabriel said that the land currently owned by Tesco on Old Lane has planning permission for houses. Mark Parry observed that if Beeston Campaign for Affordable Housing wish to send the draft of Bill Birch's letter to the Planning Department, they can do so. Christine Thornton expressed concerns that to some extent, Beeston Campaign for Affordable Housing is confused with the Beeston Forum, but are, in fact separate groups. John Fenton noted that if Aspiring Communities resubmitted a planning application, which is refused, they might sell the land. He noted that more developers are interested in such sites. Greg Turton said that we would need to know what type of housing this area needs. Once that is known, decisions can be taken as to whether a site is suitable. Christine Thornton noted that if a site deemed suitable for housing is owned by someone unwilling to build houses, no houses would be built. She said that it is hoped to highlight areas suitable for housing in the Beeston Plan. Greg Turton noted that we are not professionals, and someone might assist us in this connection.

Mark Parry proposed that we take no action in relation to Bill Birch's draft letter, other than to inform Bill Birch of our decision to take no action. Greg Turton proposed a rider to investigate the housing needs of the area through the Beeston Plan. Mary Dinsdale wondered whether the former Co-op property, more recently occupied by Passmores on Barkly Road is vacant, and whether that can be used for housing. She noted that she passed the site 2 to 3 months ago and there were no signs on it. Christine Thornton noted that she had seen a 'For Sale' sign on the property when she last walked past it three months ago. Mark Parry pointed out that the Beeston Forum cannot bind the Neighbourhood Forum. The resolution proposed by Mark Parry was passed

8. Correspondence-

8.1 Robert Winfield read an e mail from Victoria Hinchliff Walker of the Leeds City Council Development Department informing us of two planning applications in relation to the site of the Asda store on Old Lane. The first application varies a number of conditions as

follows:-

Condition 3 – site access – the site access is being moved very slightly from its current position, this is being done to enable the existing store to continue trading for a longer period whilst construction takes place and should prevent construction traffic and customer traffic from merging.

Condition 4 – maximum allowed floorspace for sale of comparison goods (e.g. clothes, electrical etc) – Asda are seeking to increase the area allowed for comparison goods from 340 sq m to 747 sq m, an increase of 407 sq m. The sales area of convenience goods would reduce by 246 sq m. The changes are being sought due to efficiencies in the use of space within the store, and proposals for external sales area (such as a covered canopy area for seasonal goods sales). From what I can currently make out this all results in a very slight increase in overall floorspace for sales, some of which will be outside at the front of the store.

Condition 5 – opening hours 0800 – 2300 Mondays to Saturdays and 1000 – 2200 Sundays and Bank Hols – Asda seek to amend this to allow 24 hour trading from Monday through to Saturday night, with hours on Sundays remaining the same. This is requested to bring it in line with other stores, and due to expected customer demand.

Condition 6 – Delivery hours 0700 – 2300 Mondays to Saturdays and 0800 – 2200 Sundays/Bank Hols – Asda seek to amend this to 0600 – 2300 Mondays to Saturdays and 0700 to 2300 on Sundays/Bank Hols. This represents an increase of one hour in the mornings and one hour in the evenings on Sundays – a noise report has been submitted in support of this and condition 5.

Condition 12 – sustainable construction – details of sustainable construction have been submitted and Asda hope to discharge this condition through this application.

Condition 13 – contaminated land – again details of this have been submitted with the hope of discharging the condition.

Victoria Hinchliffe Walker noted that the application will be advertised by site notice and by neighbour notification letters. She added that she does not intend to notify previous objectors and supporters as the Department is not revisiting the principle of the scheme, simply assessing whether the variation of the conditions will cause any harm to local residents as a result of noise etc. A second planning application submits all the reserved matters regarding the proposed building appearance, scale layout and landscaping. Councillor Adam Ogilvie noted that there is a proposal that the new store will open 24 hours a day and signalled that the Councillors will strongly object. Christine Thornton said that she is unaware that the store is opening between 10 a.m and 10p.m on Sundays and thought that stores are restricted to opening for a maximum of 6 hours per day on Sundays. Robert Winfield noted that small stores can legally open for longer than 6 hours per day on Sundays. Robert Winfield noted that Asda had given assurances to the Forum that the store would not open for 24 hours a day and that delivery hours would be restricted. These assurances had caused the Forum to withdraw the holding objection which it had previously lodged to Asda's original planning application for the store. Robert Winfield felt that it is disappointing that Asda are now seeking to go back on these assurances. The meeting agreed to a proposal from Robert Winfield that we object to the proposals in relation to opening and delivery hours, and reserve our position in relation to the remaining proposals. The meeting agreed to a further proposal from Greg Turton that Robert Winfield circulate the e mail to Victoria Hinchliff Walker to members of the Committee, and the committee discusses our position in relation to the remaining aspects of the application with a view to making a recommendation to the Forum. This was agreed. Greg Turton observed that Asda had never been as upfront as Tesco were..

8.2 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Hunters Coaches in response to our letter raising a number of queries about the movement of coaches along Town Street, Beeston. Hunters Coaches pointed out that they have a contract to transport staff who work for a company based on Millshaw, and noted that this is the route on which the coaches are registered to travel. The e mail added that they would appreciate further details of the speed at which the vehicles complained about were travelling. All vehicles have trackers fitted which enable Hunters to pinpoint the whereabouts and speed of vehicles at any time. Councillor Adam Ogilvie noted that the matter had originally been raised by Graham Smith, who is a resident of Town Street. It was agreed that Robert Winfield contact Graham Smith about the matter.

9. Any Other Business-

9.1 Flytipping- Greg Turton felt that flytipping in the area had reached such proportions that something has to be done. He noted that there are a number of hotspots, notably Theodore Street. There had been a fire at the entrance to Cross Flatts Park three weeks previously. He noted that flytipping had taken the form of a barricade, consisting of ten items including a settee, mattress, duvet and a plastic Christmas tree. Christine Thornton pointed out that she had reported this, and that the culprits, who are based in Doncaster, had been traced as their address was on letters found in the settee. Greg Turton added someone working at the former bakers shop on Theodore Street had put something out on the private lane. This had been perceived as a green light to engage in flytipping. Greg Turton recalled that when Tom Smith of Leeds City Council had attended the February meeting of the Forum as a guest speaker, Greg Turton referred to flytipping at the back of garages near to Theodore Street. Greg Turton acknowledged that the matter was dealt with promptly, and the area looked nice when the items were removed, but within two weeks five or six black plastic packages had appeared. The taping holding these together eventually came loose. A substance which was identified as asbestos was found. Greg Turton noted that he reported the matter through Councillor Adam Ogilvie, and got a council officer to deal with it. As a result of the Easter holidays, and the fact that council employees dealing with asbestos do not work on weekends, the substance could not be dealt with until 23rd April. Greg Turton observed that flytipping is bringing the area down, and that people believe they can do it. He felt that the Council should make people aware of how easy it is to dispose of large items of rubbish. He also suggested notices referring to the maximum penalty which can be imposed for flytipping. Christine Thornton noted that she had recently been visited by Dave Fisher of Leeds City Council, who walked down from her house, and found a single mattress propped up beside a fence. Christine Thornton noted

that flytipping can be reported to the Dewsbury Road One Stop Shop. Greg Turton said that we need a campaign about flytipping as the situation is out of hand. Have there been any prosecutions for flytipping? He also suggested that this could become a non planning project under the Beeston Plan. Adam Ogilvie emphasised the importance of reporting instances of flytipping, where they occur. Offenders are fined. Christine Thornton noted that if items of rubbish are left outside a residents home , this is deemed to be flytipping. There was a suggestion from the audience that bin men should be instructed to put bins back where they were found, rather than in the middle of a footpath, as this blocks the footpath. Adam Ogilvie pointed out that Councillor Mark Dobson, the Cabinet member responsible for refuse collection is having a discussion about this matter with the relevant trade unions. He added that it is Councillor Dobson's view that bins should be replaced where they are found. Adam Ogilvie added that residents must have zero tolerance of flytipping. Telephone numbers which residents can phone to report flytipping have been publicised in leaflets. If anyone thinks that reporting flytipping is the responsibility of someone else, it would never be reported. A member of the audience noted that tyres had been dumped in peoples' gardens. Christine Thornton noted that 30 years ago her street was immaculate, now it is a load of rubbish and she had recently picked rubbish up from her road and path. John Fenton noted that 40% of the properties in the area are now rented, and observed that many tenants have no respect for the neighbourhood. He would expect a landlord to control his tenants. Angela Gabriel noted that she lives between two rented properties , and reminds the tenants of bin days.

9.2 Councillor Angela Gabriel asked forum members to bring her spare jars, particularly jam jars (either to her home or to forum meetings)