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## **BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM**

### **Beeston Community Forum General Meeting- 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

#### **Agenda**

- 1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**
- 2. Apologies for absence**
- 3. Guest Speakers- Mr Steve Williamson, Chairman, Partnership Engagement Group, South Leeds Investment Partnership and Mr David Helliwell, Evans.**
- 4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011**
- 5 Correspondence**
- 6. Planning application by Tesco Stores Limited**
- 7. Proposal by Asda relating to the site of the Netto store, Old Lane**
- 8. Report of Committee meeting- 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011**
- 9. Beeston Village Community Centre**
- 10. Any Other Business**

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr. R. Almond, J.Bagguley, Mr. J. Baron (Health for All (Leeds)), Mr. R. Bell, Mr. C. Betteley, Mrs. C. Betteley, Mr. W.J. Birch, Mrs. D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs. S. Burton, Councillor D. Congreve, Mr. J. Cunningham, A.P. Eales, Mr. J. Hodgson, Mr. J.R.Hook, PCSO K. Johnson (West Yorkshire Police), Miss. P. Johnson, Mrs. D. Kenny, C. Kirk, Mr.J. Lee, MBE, Mr. A. Mann, Mr. G.M. Mason, Mrs. M. Mason, Mrs. E.Newton, Mr. M. Parry, Mr. J. Peckham, Sgt. A. Rogers (West Yorkshire Police), Mr. F. Strides, Mr.F. Swift, Mr. G. Turton and Mr. R.J.W. Winfield

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton thanked those present for their attendance.
2. Apologies for absence were received from John Fenton and Nicola Watkis
3. Guest Speaker- Christine Thornton introduced the guest speaker ; Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn , MP.
  - 3.1 Hilary Benn thanked the Forum for its invitation. He explained that he will speak briefly, then allow members of the audience to raise issues. He thanked members of the Forum for their work and praised Robert Winfield for his detailed minutes of meetings. He was aware of a number of local issues; notably, the proposal for a park and ride scheme at Elland Road.He noted that the Beeston and Holbeck Councillors; David Congreve, Adam Ogilvie and Angela Gabriel had expressed concerns about this idea and said that he fully shares these concerns. He is not sure what level of demand there would be for such a scheme. Hilary Benn welcomed the proposal to relocate the police station to Elland Road but also expressed concerns about the impact of cuts on police numbers. He hoped that every effort will be made to ensure that there will be no impact on neighbourhood policing. He explained that he has seen the effect of neighbourhood policing in his 12 years as an MP. He pointed out that neighbourhood policing is undertaken by people who know the area, build relationships and make a difference in the level of confidence in policing. He added that the police need to build a relationship with the communities which they

serve.

3.2 Hilary Benn then turned to the economy. He noted that the level of unemployment is rising, including in the Leeds Central constituency. Forecasts for economic growth had been revised downwards. He acknowledged that the current deficit needs to be dealt with but pointed out that there is a debate as to how best to do this. He felt that if cuts are implemented too quickly, this will undermine economic growth. He felt that economic growth would help us to pay off the deficit and reduce unemployment. Hilary Benn said that he is concerned that the gap between rich and poor is high and noted that economic conditions are more difficult worldwide.

3.3 The meeting then opened up to questions from the floor. John Hodgson pointed out that he recently went to a meeting of Leeds City Council about the closure of Old Peoples' Homes, but was pleased to hear Angela Gabriel express concerns about the Elland Road Park and Ride Scheme at the meeting. John Hodgson added that it is a matter of concern to him that the leaders of each of the major parties on Leeds City Council, including Keith Wakefield, appear to be interested in the scheme. He noted that there is a masterplan for the Elland Road area which spoke about a park and ride scheme for 700 cars. He added that this is an area which suffers high pollution; more people coming into the area will make things worse. He noted that Angela Gabriel had mentioned a park and ride scheme in York where the location of the scheme is well away from the City Centre. He felt that a park and ride scheme for Leeds would be better located in places such as Churwell, Tingley or Stourton. He added that First Bus had said that it is not interested in a park and ride scheme at Elland Road as they do not believe it is economically viable. Other park and ride schemes in other parts of Yorkshire had not been successful. However, John Hodgson was concerned that once a major political party on Leeds City Council decides to support a park and ride scheme, the whips would be applied, and that there would be no local consultation. He was worried that there would be the same outcome as the so called consultation process which had taken place in connection with Old Peoples' Homes. Hilary Benn felt that John Hodgson had made a number of good points and that there should always be consultation. He added that the ward councillors had said what they think, and represent the area really well. Councillor Angela Gabriel acknowledged that John Hodgson had quoted her speech at the recent meeting of Leeds City Council. She felt that it is inappropriate to locate a park and ride scheme so close to the City Centre. Elland Road is indeed only one motorway junction away from the City Centre. She felt that a park and ride scheme would be better located at a place such as Stourton. John Hodgson said that all three councillors were concerned about parking. He was worried that issues such as this had been decided by the Council Officers. Councillor Angela Gabriel suggested that the Forum should write a letter about this matter. Robert Winfield pointed out that the letter to the Yorkshire Evening Post which he understood had not been published, expressed the Forum's concerns about a possible park and ride scheme at Elland Road. Councillor Adam Ogilvie suggested that we should write to Martin Farrington, the Director of City Development. Councillor David Congreve added that residents have had no office brief them about possible park and ride scheme and that the issue had been sprung on the councillors. He urged us to get Council officers to the Forum and let them justify it. Bill Birch. Bill Birch said that we get these things sprung on us bit by bit. There had been discussion of ideas such as the park and ride scheme and the new police station which are all part of the same development, but he asked why there is no liaison committee. Bill Birch pointed out that he formerly worked for the National Coal Board, which always set up a liaison committee, on which councillors and local residents are represented, for important developments. He said that more and more things are driven by officers who have a master plan, and do not even brief councillors. We must put an end to it.

3.4 Other issues dealt with included the impact of the Localism Bill, internships, the 'Big Society', the causes of the recent riots in certain English cities, the role of the Metropolitan Police, Community cohesion, the punishment of MPs who are guilty of wrongdoing in relation to expenses, discrimination in relation to the buying of insurance, the coverage of politics by journalists.

4. The minutes of the meeting of the Forum held on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2011. Robert Winfield explained that before the meeting, he had been approached by Councillor David Congreve, who reminded him that he had attended the meeting, despite the fact that his name had been recorded amongst those presenting apologies for absence. Robert Winfield explained that he would, in the circumstances, be delighted to propose an appropriate correction to the minutes. John Hodgson felt that the minutes, as drafted, convey the impression that the South Leeds Action Group brought in the Leeds University Professor. He pointed out that it was in fact the Liaison Group which had done this.

5. Matters Arising- Christine Thornton noted that the Forum's decision to object to the erection of a phone mast

had been picked up by Sam Casey of the Yorkshire Evening Post. The YEP published a press article about the matter which was accompanied by a photograph of a number of forum members at the site of the proposed mast.

6. Correspondence. Robert Winfield had received a number of letters dealing with the Tesco planning application which would be dealt with in the relevant section of the agenda.

6.1 Robert Winfield had received a letter from Hilary Benn who explained that his attendance at the Forum AGM would depend on parliamentary business on the day.

6.2 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Steve Williamson , Chairman of the PEG group for the South Leeds Investment Partnership, who pointed out that David Helliwell of Evans will be able to attend the Forum as a Guest Speaker in addition to Steve Williamson on 6<sup>th</sup> October.

6.3 Robert Winfield had received a letter from Gareth Reed of the Leeds City Council Development Department inviting Forum members to attend a meeting to discuss planning policy relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation at Hillside at 6p.m on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September.

6.4 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Insp. Damien Miller of West Yorkshire Police apologising for the absence of police officers from the Forum meetings in July and August. He pointed out that there was an incident in July involving an unannounced demonstration in Beeston which utilised all police resources on the evening of the meeting. However, he was not aware of any reason why the police should have been absent from the August meeting. He would look into the matter and ensure that it does not happen again.

6.5 Robert Winfield had received an e mail from David Florence, the Facilities Manager of Health for All (Leeds) apologising for the fact that the photocopier at Beeston Village Community Centre was not working when he visited Beeston Village Community Centre to use it. Robert Winfield felt that the photocopying facilities at the Centre are adequate providing that the two photocopiers are kept in good upkeep ; in particular if toner is fitted whenever the toner runs out.

7. Tesco Planning Application. Robert Winfield had received a number of letters dealing with the planning application. He had received a letter from Deborah Hayeems ,the Corporate Affairs Manager of Tesco Stores Limited explaining that following discussions with Council Officers, Tesco has been required to remove its commitment to provide benches along Old Lane from the planning application. Deborah Hayeems added that Tesco recognise that this is an important provision especially for elderly residents of Beeston , and would like to confirm that they will still honour the commitment to fund new benches along Old Lane. Robert Winfield added that he had received the draft of a Section 106 Agreement between Tesco Stores Limited and Leeds City Council from the Leeds City Council Planning Department. He then received notification from Leeds City Council that the plans panel meeting at which the planning application will be decided would take place at 1.30p.m on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September in Committee rooms 6 and 7 of Leeds Civic Hall. Following receipt of this notification, Robert Winfield wrote to Leeds City Council to as how the Forum can influence the content of the Section 106 Agreement, should the Forum wish to do so. Robert Winfield also took the opportunity of raising a number of pertinent queries about the agreement, such as why two appendices; the Metro Bus Stop Plan and the Travel Plan were blank. Robert Winfield received a reply from Martha Hughes the Principal Planning Officer of Planning Services South. She said that if Beeston Forum wish to make any comments about the draft agreement , these should be reported to David Newbury the Lead Officer for East Plans Panel prior to the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September. The letter went onto say that the recommendation to the plans panel will be to defer and delegate approval of the application to officers subject to the completion of the section 106 agreement in accordance with the resolution of the plans panel. If comments are received after the plans panel meeting, Leeds City Council will try to take these into consideration but the completion of the agreement will need to be in accordance with the plans panel resolution.

Martha Hughes added that the public transport contribution is required in line with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document. A financial contribution proportionate to the travel impact of the scheme will be required towards the cost of providing strategic transport enhancements which are needed to accommodate additional trips on the network. In this case a contribution of £216301 is required and the letter attached a detailed calculation as to how this figure is arrived at. The bus shelter in front of the proposed site had been identified for the improvements set out in the draft section 106 agreement.

Bill Birch pointed out that Robert Winfield had e mailed him a copy of the draft section 106 agreement in

advance of the meeting. He explained that he has concerns about the public infrastructure contribution which, he noted is by far the largest amount of money required to be contributed. He was concerned about one clause of the agreement which states that the money is towards 'public transport or other environmental improvements within the vicinity of the development or elsewhere in the administrative area of the Council as the Council in its absolute discretion may decide are required as a consequence of the development'. Bill Birch noted that there would be nothing to stop Leeds City Council spending the money in, for example, Headingley, which he felt would be totally wrong. In his view, the money should be spent only in Beeston and Holbeck Ward. Additionally, he would not wish to see the money spent on a Park and Ride scheme at Elland Road, which he felt is nothing to do with the Tesco development. Robert Winfield said that he would be interested to learn why the Council Officers had requested Tesco to remove the undertaking to provide benches along Old Lane from the planning application. Robert Winfield also noted that the Tesco planning application had been described as the most important planning application in the area of Beeston for many years. Particularly in view of this, he said that it is inappropriate for the application to be decided by officers. He felt that the application must be decided by the Councillors who are elected by the people of Beeston and other areas of Leeds. Bill Birch criticised the Council Officers for being high on what they want, whilst striking out what we want. Greg Turton was critical of the short interval of time between the receipt of the draft section 106 agreement and the plans meeting. He accepted that concerns expressed after the meeting will not have the same impact. It was agreed that Robert Winfield write to Leeds City Council to express these concerns.

8. Beeston Village Community Centre- Robert Winfield reported that the meeting of the Steering Committee will take place at 2p.m on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September. Robert Winfield expressed his concerns that Brian Pine, the facilities manager of Health for All (Leeds) which rents the Community Centre from Leeds City Council had decided not to produce an agenda for the meeting. Robert Winfield explained that, based on his own experience of changing meetings, that if an agenda is not produced, there would be a risk of the meeting not being structured and therefore achieving less than if an agenda had been prepared. This is all the more important in view of the fact that the steering committee had not met for over a year and that there are consequently a number of important matters to catch up on. Richard Bell felt that in the circumstances, Robert Winfield should prepare his own agenda for the meeting. Robert Winfield supported this. Robert Winfield noted that Health for All (Leeds) had taken legal advice as to the function of the steering group and had been advised that the group has no authority to give Health for All (Leeds) instructions as to how the building should be run; it can only give advice which Health for All (Leeds) can accept or reject at its discretion. Health for All (Leeds) has the sole authority to take decisions in relation to the building, subject to the terms of the lease with Leeds City Council. Mark Parry expressed concern that it had been impossible to lower the shutters which cover the fire door to the building. It was agreed to raise this with Health for All.

## 9. Any Other Business

9.1 Robert Winfield pointed out that Sir Norman Bettison, the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire had recently undertaken a walkabout in Beeston. According to a report of this in the Yorkshire Evening Post, representatives of a number of local groups had been invited to accompany him, but to the best of Robert Winfield's knowledge, no representative of the Beeston Forum had been invited. It was agreed that Robert Winfield write to Insp. Damien Miller to express our concerns.

9.2 Fraser Stride explained that almost one year ago, Greenhouse had opened in the former Shaftesbury House Building. There would be a celebration on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October, when members of the public will be welcome to see how the building is developing.

9.3 Police Report- Sgt Andy Rogers drew the attention of members to a meeting of the West Yorkshire Police Authority taking place on 9<sup>th</sup> September at Pudsey Civic Hall. There had been a few problems, notably thefts from motor vehicles on the Paarkfields for which two people had been caught. The Anti Social Behaviour Unit had also dealt with a family on Cardinal Square. Hilary Benn asked about the drugs problem at Holbeck Cemetery. Sgt. Rogers said that the problem had quietened down, but acknowledged that PCSOs cannot be in all areas. The police are currently concentrating on the issue of prostitution in Holbeck, but some people on the Nosters are collating information about drugs and this will be the next operation in which the police are involved. Sgt. Rogers pointed out that he is not parochial about taking staff from other areas in order to deal with problems.

