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BEESTON COMMUNITY FORUM

Beeston Forum General Meeting - 1st August 2013

Agenda

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speakers- Tim Flanagan and Dean Stratton
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 4th July 2013
5. Police Report
6. Report of the subgroup dealing with a Neighbourhood Plan for Beeston
7. Correspondence
8. Report of Committee meeting held on 18th July 2013
9. Any Other Business

Minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Community Forum held on Thursday 4th July 2013

Attendance:- Christine Thornton (in the chair), Mr. J.K. Adamson, Mr. R. Adamson, Mr. R. Bell, Mr. W.J. Birch, Mr. D. Blackburn, Mrs. J. Blackburn, , Mr. D.C. Bottomley, Mr. D. Brooke, Mr. K. Burton, Mrs S. Burton, R. Casseley, Mrs. M. Cook, J. Coyne, D. Craven, Mr. J. Cunningham, Mrs. M. Dinsdale, Mr. J. Fenton, Councillor A. Gabriel, Mr. K. Hewson, Mrs. M. Hobson, Mr. J. Hodgson, Miss. P. Johnson, Mr. A. Kirby, Mrs. D. Kenny, Mr. R. Kitson, Mr. A. Mahmood, Mr. Y. Mahmood, Mrs. M. Mason, E. McClelland, M. McClelland, A. McGrath, Miss E. Newton, Mr. J. Peckham, Mrs. C. Stevens, Mr. F. Swift, Mr.G. Turton, P. Whitehead, Mr. R.J.W. Winfield and Mr. N. Zaman

1. Chairman's Opening Remarks- Christine Thornton welcomed those present to the meeting. She noted that it had been intended that we would host Councillor Keith Wakefield, Leader of Leeds City Council, as a guest speaker but she pointed out that he had to cancel. The meeting would therefore proceed as an 'Open Forum' in which any member of the Forum would be able to raise relevant issues.
2. Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Congreve and Adam Ogilvie and John Hook
3. The minutes of the meeting of the Beeston Forum held on Thursday 6th June 2013 were accepted as a fair and accurate record of the meeting.
4. Matters Arising- John Hodgson noted that there are three important local issues affecting Beeston; the proposal by Aspiring Communities to develop the former Ice Pak factory on Barkly Road, the Planning Applications by Asda and Tesco for stores on Old Lane and the proposal for a Park and Ride Scheme at Elland Road. He felt that discussion on each of these issues is more urgent than a discussion about a possible neighbourhood plan for Beeston. He also referred to press comment about proposals to introduce charges for Residents Car Parking permits. Councillor Angela Gabriel said that the question of whether to introduce charges for residents parking permits had been put out to consultation by Leeds City Council ; no decisions had been taken, and opinions about the matter were being sought. Angela Gabriel said that a charge of £50 per annum was being considered. One important issue is that some areas, such as

around Elland Road operate residents only car parking on match days only . Would such residents pay the full £50 per annum or just a proportion of this? John Hodgson noted that he attended the meeting of the Leeds City Council Executive Board at which the report dealing with this issue was discussed. There was no mention of match days. He also feared that if charges are implemented , it would be necessary for residents to pay a further £50 per year to enable visitors to park. Angela Gabriel said that the whole point of the consultation is about its effect on people; she noted that residents' parking permits are not everywhere , and that in areas around sports grounds such as Elland Road and the stadium at which Leeds Rhinos play, there is only one reason for not allowing unrestricted car parking. Angela Gabriel wondered whether we would like to invite a speaker dealing with this issue to a future meeting of the Forum.

Margaret McClennan said that she is a resident of Wesley Croft and pointed out that there is an unadopted road at the rear of her house, which she owns. She noted that a sign saying 'No match day parking' had been placed on this road. Angela Gabriel noted that someone had complained to her about the situation. Robert Winfield noted that the speakers for the August meeting were Gerald Jennings and Tim Flanagan , dealing with the plans for the White Rose Centre. He added that Rt. Hon Hilary Benn would be a guest speaker at the September meeting which would also now be attended by Mr Ian Mackay, the Leeds City Council Officer responsible for Neighbourhood Plans . Robert Winfield said that there could be problems relating to the management of the September meeting if there were an additional speaker at the meeting. The meeting agreed to a suggestion that we seek to invite an appropriate speaker to the August meeting. John Hodgson then suggested that we prioritise discussion of the Park and Ride proposals, and the proposals for the development of the Ice Pak factory, over the discussion of the possible Neighbourhood Plan for Beeston. After some discussion, it was agreed to proceed with the published agenda for the meeting , with the matters described by John Hodgson being dealt with under Any Other Business, if time permits.

5. Possible Neighbourhood Plan for Beeston-

5.1 Greg Turton introduced the discussion about this matter. He noted that he had raised the issue of neighbourhood planning at the Beeston Forum Committee and had then explored the issue further. He added that a newsletter which referred to the issue had been produced for the Beeston Festival; 1000 copies were produced of which 900 had been handed out. There was also a stall with a display about neighbourhood planning. Greg Turton noted that the Committee felt that it had needed advice about how to proceed. Accordingly, Ian Mackay , the Team Leader for Neighbourhood Planning for Leeds City Council, was invited to attend the Committee meeting on 20th June. Ian Mackay stressed that Leeds City Council are foremost amongst councils as being supportive of the concept of neighbourhood planning. It was noted that most areas going forward with a neighbourhood plan are parish councils. These tend to be in leafy suburbs, villages and well to do areas. Ian Mackay had noted that Beeston is an urban area, but is not classed as an inner city area although there are pockets of deprivation. It was noted that we must determine the area to be served by the Neighbourhood Plan. This could be the area served by the Beeston Forum, but does not have to be this area. We would need to put in place a Neighbourhood Forum which represents all sections of the community.

5.2 Greg Turton then addressed the issue of what a Neighbourhood Plan is. This is defined in the Localism Act 2011, and is a new right giving local communities the power to prepare a plan. This is a community plan prepared by the Community and subject to independent examination and a referendum. If the plan is voted for in the referendum, it is adopted by the local council as a statutory development plan. The council has a legal obligation to use it to decide planning applications. A Neighbourhood Plan can determine planning matters as well as non planning issues. The Beeston Forum could sponsor a Neighbourhood Plan; Greg Turton noted that the Forum has existed for over 13 years. A Neighbourhood Forum must consist of a minimum of 21 members , who may live, work or carry on business in the area. The Neighbourhood Forum would determine areas to be addressed , such as housing , retail, employment and skills. Membership of a Neighbourhood Forum must be open to all. Local councillors would be invited to attend. The neighbourhood plan must serve a named area, although this is not set in stone. It is possible for more than one area to share a neighbourhood plan. The neighbourhood plan must be consistent with the City's core strategy and cannot contradict it. A Neighbourhood Forum requires a constitution setting out aims and objectives, defining voting and non voting members, laying down the frequency of meetings , dealing with issues such as officers and the holding of elections for officers. The constitution would also deal with matters such as whether the Neighbourhood Forum remains in existence after the adoption of the plan, so that it continues to monitor the plan, or dissolves. The Neighbourhood Plan is adopted if a majority vote for the plan in the referendum. The turnout in the referendum is not relevant.

5.3 The examination of the Neighbourhood Plan would look at three areas. Has the correct process set out under the legislation been followed? Was the consultation appropriate? Have all people had the chance to put their views? Have the authors of the plan reacted to the advice given to them? Leeds City Council Officers would help with the preparation of the plan; however, if we do not follow their advice, the plan is likely to be failed at the examination stage. A further question is whether the consultation process has been used well to form the conclusions.

5.4 Part A of the Neighbourhood Plan will deal with the issue of development sites; housing, shops, policies and proposals. Part B gives details of the projects to be undertaken. Greg Turton pointed out that there are challenges in putting together the document. One such possible challenge is apathy, although he does not think that would happen in Beeston. He acknowledged, though that the Forum would need to think creatively about ensuring that people are heard. We need to determine priorities and carry out a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). Greg Turton noted that Ian Mackay had said that we would have the benefit of 5 ½ days of planning consultancy, paid for by a charity, Locality. We would be able to have grant aid for up to £9500 on consultancy fees and £7000 on projects. It was noted that Ian Mackay felt that all costs could be managed within a budget. It was thought that any liabilities to a neighbourhood Forum, are likely to be covered by the Partner Organisations, Leeds City Council, Locality and Voluntary Action Leeds. If adopted, the neighbourhood plan would be a statutory planing document. Leeds City Council would be legally obliged to use the

document to determine planing applications. Greg Turton noted that he has been appointed by the Committee to coordinate the work to be undertaken in relation to the Neighbourhood Plan. He said that we need to decide four things:-

- I) Is it for us
- II) Do we use the SWOT analysis
- III) how will we display the results of the SWOT analysis
- IV) how can areas identified through the consultation be addressed

5.5 The Neighbourhood Forum would write the plan and put this forward for examination. If the plan passes the examination, there would be a referendum. This is a long process. Greg Turton noted that Ian Mackay had indicated that we could gain approval as a Neighbourhood Area by the end of the year. Next year, the Neighbourhood Forum would get on with its work. The May elections in 2015 would be a target date for a Referendum. Greg Turton said that the Forum Committee feels that this is the way forward, but a vote is needed to get the process under way.

5.6 The meeting then opened up to questions and comments from the floor. John Peckham asked how many of the 21 members of the Neighbourhood Forum would need to be local residents. Greg Turton said that this is not set and we would need to take advice. The majority of the members would, however probably be resident. John Peckham said that he is in favour of the concept of a Neighbourhood Plan but felt that it is important that the majority of the members of the Neighbourhood Forum should be residents.

5.7 A member of the audience asked what would be the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Plan. Doubts were raised as to whether we could vote on the principle of a plan without the area having been determined. Greg Turton said that he had the Beeston Community Forum Area in mind but that Ian Mackay had advised that we should not decide the area there and then but carry out the SWOT analysis first. The SWOT analysis might influence the area. Christine Thornton said that the area can be determined by the Neighbourhood Forum , and that Ian Mackay had advised that the question of the area should be placed on the back burner. Robert Winfield pointed out that the Beeston Forum Area, which is defined in the Forum's constitution, starts from the Beeston and Holbeck Leeds City Council ward and excludes Holbeck (which the Forum does not represent), Cottingley (which the forum does represent) and the small area of Wortley which had been included in Beeston and Holbeck Ward by accident.

5.8 John Hodgson noted that Dennis Kitchen had been appointed as the interim Chairman of the Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum, and pointed out that there had been three meetings , but so far, no permanent Chairman had been elected nor had the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan been decided. He added that a SWOT analysis dealing with Holbeck would have produced very similar results to a similar exercise undertaken 20 years ago. John Hodgson pointed out that at one time ,we had been considering inviting Dennis Kitchen to a meeting of the Forum, and wondered whether we should listen to Ian Mackay. With regard to Holbeck, he pointed out that one of the meetings had been attended by 100 people; another by 30 people. He noted that local businesses in Holbeck did not wish to be connected with Leeds City Council as they had lost confidence in it. There has been no decision about a constitution or an area for the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Angela Gabriel said that the residents of Holbeck did not ask to have a plan, but were told to get a plan by Leeds City Council. She noted that the Forum is being asked to vote about whether to explore a plan, not to go all the way. Greg Turton said that he had framed the resolution which would be put to the meeting to set the process going.

5.9 Bill Birch said that we need to move with the Neighbourhood Plan. He noted that he had written to the Council to express his concerns about the piecemeal nature of development in Beeston. He noted that planning applications had been approved, or were pending for a new police station, two hotels on Elland Road, new supermarkets on Old Lane and the new development on the site of Ice Pak. He added that if we are not careful, by the time the plan is in place, the council would have done what they want. If we do not do something, the Council would stick it to us. Bill Birch urged those present to get on with the plan, and said that we want the Beeston that people want.

5.10 Greg Turton proposed the resolution as follows:-

"It is proposed that the Beeston Community Forum will sponsor the drafting of a Beeston Neighbourhood Plan. To this end, it will make arrangements to put in place a neighbourhood forum and determine the area relating to the plan. The neighbourhood forum will then proceed to write the Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act of 2011".

The members of the Forum voted in favour of the resolution by 42 to 2 with one abstention. Mary Mason explained that she would like to know more about the proposals before feeling able to vote in favour of them. It was also resolved that the next meeting of the Forujm Committee would discuss how best to take this idea forward. Richard Bell wondered whether it is important to make clear that the Neighbourhood Forum would be separate from the Beeston Community Forum. Greg Turton said that is important. Christine Thornton stressed that the Beeston Community Forum would carry on as it is. Greg Turton felt that it would not be appropriate to carry out a SWOT analysis at the present meeting as that is the responsibility of the neighbourhood Forum. The Neighbourhood Forum would be owned by the residents of Beeston, not by the Beeston Forum. Christine Thornton, however noted that Ian Mackay had suggested undertaking a SWOT analysis at the Forum meeting, noted that those attending the Forum live in Beeston. Greg Turton said that he would contact people in Beeston to enable them to undertake the SWOT analysis. Councillor Angela Gabriel suggested that we would need to have a public meeting to determine the Neighbourhood Forum members; she suggested sending out letters about this. The Neighbourhood Forum would then develop a life of its own. Greg Turton said that he had received SWOT analyses from four members of the Forum Committee and these would be fed into the Neighbourhood Forum. Christine Thornton felt that it would be sensible to undertake a SWOT analysis which would come from the Beeston Community Forum. John Hodgson noted that there had been 90 people at the Holbeck public meeting , comprising local residents, police, businessmen and representatives of Leeds City Council. Greg Turton felt that local residents should have the opportunity to carry out a SWOT analysis unprompted. Returns from the SWOT analysis

would be examined by the Neighbourhood Forum. These would represent the true priorities of the area. A member of the audience who did not receive a newsletter at the recent Beeston Festival indicated a preference to go away and think about the SWOT analysis. Richard Bell suggested adding information about the neighbourhood plan, and a suitable questionnaire to the Forum website. Robert Winfield accepted this suggestion, and also suggested adding links to information published on the internet about neighbourhood plans so that anyone looking at the website could become well informed about issues connected with neighbourhood plans. However, Robert Winfield added that his own workload might mean that the process of updating the website might be slower than he would wish. Councillor Angela Gabriel noted that the Holbeck Gala would be taking place on Saturday 6th July; there would be a tent devoted to the issue of Neighbourhood Planning; local residents would be able to go along and find out more, and see how residents of Holbeck have got to where they are. A member of the audience noted that many people do not come to meetings, then say that they do not want that. Greg Turton said that if the consultation process is searching extensive and appropriate, the resulting neighbourhood plan will go through the examination. Robert Winfield pointed out that under the Forum Constitution, all residents of Beeston (as defined by the Constitution) are treated as members of the Forum and are entitled to attend and vote at Forum meetings. Clearly, the venue for our meeting would not be able to accommodate all residents of Beeston; however Robert Winfield noted that the Beeston Forum Area has a venue which would be able to do this (Elland Road Football Ground). It was noted that many people are aware of things going on in the area. A member of the audience asked how extensive the process would be in letting people know. It was suggested that people are not bothered about issues until it concerns them. Greg Turton noted that if we delivered a leaflet to each household in Beeston, 6000 leaflets would be required.

6. Correspondence- Robert Winfield noted that all of the correspondence which had been dealt with at the Committee meeting on 16th May 2013 had effectively been overtaken by subsequent events. The Special Committee meeting on 18th July 2013 had dealt with the letter from Zeb Ahmed which had been left on the top table for inspection by Forum members at the previous Forum meeting. The meeting had also dealt with a number of e mails from Bill Birch in relation to the plans by Aspiring Communities for the former Ice Pak factory. Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Rt. Hon Hilary Benn MP in response to an e mail setting out our concerns about members of the public being offered free money with which to gamble. Hilary Benn said that he shares the Forum's concerns about the advertisements, which seem to dominate day time television, and about the proliferation of pay day lending shops in our streets. He noted that the advertisements come under the remit of the Advertising Standards Authority and that the OFT had recently announced an inquiry into these firms. Hilary Benn added that he is also campaigning for local authorities and communities to have more power to decide which shops they want opening in their local area. Changing the current rules on use class orders would allow them to change permitted development rights so that we can have more balanced High Streets. Robert Winfield had received an e mail from Chris Stephenson, the Development Librarian for Beeston Library. He explained that he would like to work with the Forum. Christine Thornton and Robert Winfield felt that it would be sensible for him to attend a forum meeting and speak informally to members of the Committee; however he was unable to attend the present meeting, but would be welcome to attend a future Forum meeting.

7. Report of Committee Meetings – Christine Thornton noted that the Special Meeting of the Committee which had been called for Tuesday 16th May was largely taken up with a discussion of the pre planning hearing in connection with the plans by Aspiring Communities for the former Ice Pak factory. The Committee meeting on Thursday 18th May dealt with the issue of Neighbourhood Planning and had hosted Mr Ian Mackay of Leeds city Council.

8. Plans by Aspiring Communities for the former Ice Pak factory. It was noted that the committee had formulated a short statement to be read by Mark Parry to the pre planning hearing. The statement which had been read at the meeting was:-

Beeston Community Forum opposes the plans as they are currently drawn because of the impact on the local highway network and the disturbance to a residential area. According to the report large numbers of people will be coming to the building to weddings, funerals, Friday Prayers and other major events involving up to 1,500 people.

- ⌚ This huge development in a quiet residential area is designed to attract large numbers of people and this traffic will have a detrimental effect on the area.
- ⌚ We note that St Anthony's school is virtually adjacent to the proposed site indeed we believe closer than is stated in the officers' report. We have concerns regarding the road safety of children attending this school.
- ⌚ The estimated large numbers of those attending suggests many may travel by car, some events exceeding the capacity of the car park to be provided. This would cause an overflow of parked cars in the surrounding streets causing parking difficulties for residents.
- ⌚ Even with a larger car park, the extra traffic generated at specific starting and finishing times will cause congestion on a minor traffic calmed road, further increasing pollution levels for the neighbourhood.
- ⌚ The catering entrance may cause a traffic nuisance to those residents in the narrow streets to the rear of the site.
- ⌚ The site has outlying planning permission for residential development and this appears on the Leeds site allocation plans "Your City Your Say" currently under consultation. In view of the shortage of housing we feel this residential usage is a priority.
- ⌚ In conclusion we feel the scale of this project is far too large for this residential area.

8.2 Christine Thornton pointed out that a lot of Forum members had attended the relevant Plans Panel Meeting on 20th June. Zeb Ahmed of Aspiring Communities had given a presentation to the meeting similar to the presentations which he had made to the Beeston Forum. Mark Parry then read his statement. Each of the councillors had the opportunity to make comments and question Zeb Ahmed and Mark

Parry. Christine Thornton pointed out that Zeb Ahmed had said that there would be a 16 m minaret; functions held at the premises would be booked , and that the front of the existing office block building would remain in situ for 3 to 4 years. It would be the last part of the present site to be demolished. He said that the plans satisfied all traffic and highways requirements. The development would cost £4m to £5m and would provide employment for eight staff. Christine Thornton noted that Councillor David Congreve had said that he could understand local concerns. The development would be huge; occupying an area of 3000 square metres. It would indeed be larger than the supermarkets proposed by Asda and Tesco. It was noted that people would be able to park for a few hours. There have been concerns expressed about community cohesion. It was noted that some councillors were pleased that the issue of community cohesion was being addressed, but unsure as to how the issue would pan out. There had also been concerns about traffic on Elland Road match days. It was suggested that traffic management needs to be robust and that there should be no loose agreements. It was noted that David Congreve had also raised concerns about the design of the building (which is virtually a warehouse) and the use of its space. He was not quite sure how the various areas of the building would be used. It appeared as though the organisation running the building is evolving and that there is no long term plan. David Congreve also expressed fears that the small windows were not sufficiently large to allow adequate light into the building. He also felt that the minaret should be no higher than the highest point of the building. He added that he understood what local residents are saying and felt that there should be more meaningful consultation. It was felt that there should be limitations on the use of the building; no extra marquees, no outside events and no external noise. David Congreve also took the view that there should be no rear access to the building. Gates should be left closed, on the basis that if the gates were left open, an area of ground could be used as an overflow car park for users of the centre. Residents of the street have little or no off street parking. If the development goes ahead, it must work in harmony with local people. David Congreve felt that the building should close at 9p.m each evening. He was also unhappy about the figures giving details of anticipated users of the centre.

8.3 Ash Mahmood acknowledged that one of the key aspects of the plan relates to traffic management. He noted that Amey , a Leeds City Council approved organisation , had published a report dealing with traffic issues. The report concluded that traffic management issues meet the requirements for the pre planning hearing and further consultation. He stressed that Aspiring Communities would continue to work with the Forum and other members of the Community. He said that they would address the minaret issue which had been raised by Councillor David Congreve. If members of the community do not like something they will discuss it; they will address the issues. He noted that some local people had spoken about the flow of traffic in the area. He noted that there had been discussion about events involving 1500 people , but this would happen only once per year. He would be happy to send the Forum the report which Aspiring Communities had made at the pre planning hearing. However, a member of the audience said that she was still waiting for the minutes of the meeting organised by Aspiring Communities in January 2013 even though these had been promised.

8.4 Bill Birch said that his largest concern is that there have been a large number of projects; such as the proposed Ice Rink, the proposed expansion of the White Rose Centre, and the proposed Hotels on Elland Road. All these projects have been seen in isolation. He felt that car parking places had been double counted. He suggested that the Forum write to Leeds City Council to suggest that they stop deciding such planning applications in isolation. He suggested that we seek a judicial review if Leeds City Council does not stop doing this. If we do not do this, there will be a risk that the area will be swamped with cars. Christine Thornton felt that we are swamped already. She also referred to an article in the Yorkshire Evening Post on 24th June which had referred to Mark Parry's statement to the pre planning hearing. Councillor Angela Gabriel supported Bill Birch's proposal for a letter to Leeds City Council. She noted that Hugh Gaitskell Primary School and Beeston Primary School were expanding , and there were also plans by De Puy. We need a Traffic Impact Assessment. Bill Birch's proposal was agreed by 45 votes to nil.

8.5 A member of the audience referred to a recent Yorkshire Evening Post article in which Councillor Angela Gabriel had said that the proposal is effectively for a mosque and additional community facilities. It was noted that Angela Gabriel was also quoted as saying that members of the local community were split 50-50 about the proposals. Angela Gabriel was asked where she had done the survey which had led her to these conclusions. Angela Gabriel said that she had not carried out a survey, and also noted that she had received an e mail from Greg Turton about this matter. She had formed her opinion by speaking to members of the local community. She had received ten letters in support of the scheme, and ten against. She had also spoken to local residents including the silent majority. She noted that Aspiring Communities were seeking a prayer room, part of which would be a mosque. She stressed that the YEP article incorporates their interpretation of what she had said. She stressed that she has not yet seen the plans for the building as no plans have yet been submitted.

8.6 A member of the audience noted that South Leeds Sports Centre had closed whilst the John Charles Centre is within walking distance of Beeston. However, a member of the Forum said that she had understood that the land is for housing. She added that she lives five doors down from the Aspiring Communities site, and had received no letters about the proposals, nor any invitations to meetings about it. Ash Mahmood said that there had been a multiple leaflet drop on Barkly Road, and that he had himself knocked on doors in the area. He added that the building which Aspiring Communities is seeking to build will be a community centre and open to all. All members of the community would be invited to be a part of the committee running the centre and the committee would not be confined to Pakistanis and muslim. However, it was suggested that they way in which Aspiring Communities had gone about promoting their plans was not right. It was noted that Zeb Ahmed had said that owners of cars parking on the street would be fined. Ash Mahmood said that that is what they had been told. However, the member of the audience said that she had gone round to the site at 7.20 a.m one morning and had to ask those on the site to refrain from bringing fork lift trucks and wagons onto it. She also pointed out that items were being brought into buildings at 8.40p.m on an evening. Additionally, things are going on constantly at weekends when it is impossible for local residents to contact Leeds City Council. Ash Mahmood, however said that his organisation has no fork lift trucks and wagons. He would, however, make enquiries about what had been said. When the demolition of the buildings which had been demolished took

place, they had appropriate permission. No demolition or building is taking place now. Leeds City Council's Health and Safety Department is only a telephone call away. He urged local residents with concerns to contact them; they can call at the drop of a hat and Aspiring Communities can be fined if they are doing something which they are not supposed to be doing. Christine Thornton asked Ash Mahmood to investigate the matters which had been raised.

8.7 John Peckham said that regardless of the intended use of the building, the highest potential use is 1500 visitors once a year. 300 people visiting the centre would still represent an awful lot of traffic. He has lived in the area for sixty years, and had constantly seen an increase in traffic which is not related to local residents. Traffic must still get to the site through residential streets, and he felt that this would be an inappropriate volume of traffic for the area. John Hodgson said that many local residents are frightened to say anything in opposition to the project. He had spoken to Zeb Ahmed and his architect and congratulated him and had also praised Mark Parry and David Congreve. He had heard that the proposed building would have £400 weddings for less affluent muslims. He noted that Councillor Javaid Akhtar had asked what the proposed centre would do for young muslims, and had said that Tempest Road residents would be happy to walk across Cross Flatts Park in order to attend English classes. John Hodgson said that he did not hear one thing about plans for the wider community. He noted that Zeb Ahmed had been critical about communities on the other side of the park. He had also avoided naming members of the governing body of Aspiring Communities. Nothing had been said in answer to the question 'What will you do for the non muslim local people'. John Hodgson noted that we are all in favour of community cohesion but also criticised the inconsistency of the stated plans. Ash Mahmood said that Aspiring Communities are asking local residents what they would like in terms of facilities for the Community Centre. Christine Thornton noted that Aspiring Communities had appeared at the Beeston Community Forum twice and had organised its own meeting in the area, but had not asked Forum members what they would like. John Hodgson noted that one set of planners have said that we cannot have a supermarket, but Amey had said that the development proposed by Aspiring Communities would be no problem, even though the supermarket would be smaller.

8.8 A member of the audience noted that parts of the existing building would remain for three to four years, and that in the pre planning hearing, it had been stated that 300 people would come to the community centre for prayers. Where would such visitors park cars. Ash Mahmood said that he would forward the comments which had been made to Zeb Ahmed and his architect. It was suggested that if 1500 people visit the centre, this would be likely to involve 750 cars. Ash Mahmood said that this level of traffic will not happen until the centre is actually built. A member of the audience noted that Aspiring Communities had said that it would engage a private company to organise car parking. However, this cannot happen if the building is half finished.

8.9 A member of the audience asked what makes Aspiring Communities believe that the new community centre would work with people coming from miles away to weddings and funerals in a building in the centre of an area with narrow streets and numerous elderly people. Ash Mahmood said that many community centres funded by local authorities have ceased to function, but that this is a plan for 25 to 50 years. He said that the migration of Asians to this side of Cross Flatts Park is increasing, and Aspiring Communities will try to incorporate future needs; they are trying to bring new facilities into the area.

8.10 Edna Newton noted that the centre would be for younger people and would cater for games such as football. She said that some visitors to the centre would walk, rather than travel by car. Young people playing football would not have a car. She cannot see all visitors to the centre travelling by car. He added that Leeds City Council have stated that they require additional information before a planning application is submitted; he cannot say when this would happen. A member of the audience said that all the facilities which would be a part of the new building already exist in the area. He added that some people have welcomed the project. A member of the audience asked Ash Mahmood how much of a business plan Aspiring Communities had prepared. He noted that the Hamara Centre has a gym, a weight room, community services and a dance room. With regard to sports facilities, there is the proposed facility at Cockburn School as well as the MUGA close to Hugh Gaitskell School. In the light of this, where would the custom for the new community centre come from? Ash Mahmood said that he had spoken to local residents and was providing facilities for locals to use. Greg Turton said that the present meeting had been the first time a drop in centre had been mentioned. A possible drop in centre had not been mentioned at all at the pre planning meeting. He felt that these things are brought out just to answer questions. He said that the project is as fluid as water. He had said to Zeb Ahmed that if he wants to promote community cohesion, he should promote community engagement. A member of the audience said that the proposed site is too large regardless of whether the religious element is Anglican, Methodist, Jewish or Sikh.

8.11 Noor Zaman recalled how he had been welcomed as a member of the Beeston Forum and said that everyone who attends Forum meetings wants the best for Beeston. He suggested that Aspiring Communities should go back and write down what they want in the building. Do they want to look after the elderly? Do they want to include everyone? He noted that he would prefer to see more Asians in the Forum. Ash Mahmood said that Forum members should think about what facilities they would like. A member of the audience said that she suggested that any community centre should be multi faith and that the mosque element should be removed but Aspiring Communities had been adamant that the mosque would stay. It was suggested that all members of the community would be comfortable with a multi faith community prayer room and a community centre for all.