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MEETING	GUILDHALL WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	7 NOVEMBER 2019
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS CRAGHILL, FITZPATRICK AND LOOKER LAURA REDHEAD, CYC COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OFFICER ANDY KERR, CYC HEAD OF REGENERATION EMILY ABBOT, DEPUTY MANAGER OF HEALTHWATCH 18 LOCAL RESIDENTS
APOLOGIES	ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

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## 1. **6.30-7PM: FETE-STYLE TABLES**

Prior to the main meeting, local residents were given the opportunity to speak informally with Councillor Fitzpatrick, Councillor Craghill and Councillor Looker. Representatives from various local organisations (who had set up information stalls in a separate area) were also on hand to engage with residents, provide information and answer any queries raised. These included Healthwatch, the Falls Prevention Team, Walmgate Community Association, Red Tower York and St Nicholas Fields.

- Healthwatch aims to improve health and social care by engaging with local people about services and how they could be improved and sharing their views with Healthwatch England to improve services nationally.
- The Falls Prevention Team provides advice and support to local residents who are at risk of falls (which includes home adaptations if required).
- Walmgate Community Association promotes the interest of Walmgate residents and liaises with local authorities and organisations.
- Red Tower York aims to bring the Red Tower back into public use for the benefit of the local community.
- St Nicholas Fields is a centre for nature and green living supported by a group of volunteers (Friends of St Nicholas Fields).

## 2. **7PM : WELCOME**

The meeting was chaired by Councillor Fitzpatrick who welcomed everyone and set out the agenda (which had been changed due to the election on 12 December 2019). Consequently, Councillor Fitzpatrick explained that due to purdah (the pre-election period) the meeting should be non-political. For this reason, the Environment Agency did not attend.

### **3. ANDY KERR, HEAD OF REGENERATION PROGRAMMES, CASTLE GATEWAY**

Andy Kerr gave a presentation about the development of Castle Gateway, St George's Field Car Park and Castle Mills. He referred to the master plan (which was approved in April 2018) and the importance of the advisory group which had been key in shaping proposals and providing constructive scrutiny.

He also discussed the importance of public engagement through 'My Castle Gateway' which had encouraged local participation through discussion groups, social media (and a total of 6,000 'post it' notes with a wide range of opinions).

The masterplan involves the replacement of Castle Car Park (which generates revenue of £1.2 million) with new high quality public realm and event space and a new car park at St George's Field (which will include electric charging points, roof top photo-voltaics, green wall solutions and a staircase wrapping around the exterior of the building). There will also be a riverside walk, pedestrian/cycle footbridge and new Castle Mills apartments in Piccadilly (twenty per cent of which will be council housing).

The car park would be accessed on the first floor and the lower floor would be closed during periods of flooding. Owing to a recent change in building regulations (following the Liverpool multi-storey car park fire) wood cladding was no longer an option (although other natural material could be used instead). Andy Kerr confirmed that originally, 400 parking spaces had been factored in until the discovery of a sewer resulted in a revision of the plans. The current planning application proposes 370 car parking spaces (an overall reduction of 130 spaces in the Castle Gateway area to reflect a move away from car dominance) and 25 coach parking spaces. Although there will also be some Blue Badge parking spaces it was acknowledged that additional parking provision nearer to the centre of York will be necessary for people with disabilities. Andy Kerr also confirmed that a decision had not yet been made as to whether the new pedestrian/cycle crossing on the inner ring road should be a single or two stage crossing (taking into account the potential delaying impact on traffic should a single crossing be approved).

Andy Kerr then outlined the many technical challenges encountered with regard to St George's Field Car Park which included the following constraints:-

- Sewers
- Electric cables
- Flooding (which will require raising a new flood wall and access ramp)

- Access for a crane on the site
- Conservation area
- Key heritage sites

#### **4. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Following the presentation there was an opportunity for those attending to ask further questions.

A resident asked whether a roundabout at Clifford St had been considered. Andy Kerr confirmed that it had but it would be too complicated and risked encouraging more traffic into the city centre.

With regard to the Castle Mills apartments a resident asked whether City of York Council could prevent the right to buy. Andy Kerr replied that this was unlikely. Another resident asked whether cycling provision would be available for residents living in the Castle Mills apartments. Andy Kerr confirmed that it would.

One resident applauded the vision but questioned why people were being diverted round the back of the Castle Museum. Andy Kerr explained that an additional entrance could be created through the Castle Museum as part of their wider plans.

Another resident asked whether the site of the old Dog's Home would be pulled down. Andy Kerr confirmed that it would.

With regard to St George's Field Car Park a request was made to opt for a colour other than brown. Andy Kerr confirmed that as there was more flexibility with colours this suggestion would be taken on board.

One resident referred to York Hospital Car Park and the use of metal and light. Andy Kerr stated that with regard to St George's Field Car Park, horizontal cladding combined with a living wall would lend a lighter feel to the building.

Concerns were raised about Spark York and how it would fit in with the St George's Field Car Park development. Andy Kerr said that Spark York was due to leave the site in June 2020 but they are expected to submit an application to extend the time period which would need to be considered on its merits.

A resident asked about the approximate time line for the St George's Field Car Park development and was informed that it should take between eighteen months to two years.

Another resident asked whether the sewerage in the River Ouse was treated. Andy Kerr stated that sewerage only entered the River Ouse during periods of flooding (by which time it was significantly diluted) and Yorkshire Water have a licence to do so with the Environment Agency – the council has not control over this.

Finally, a question was raised as to the strength of voltage supplied by the electric charging points. Andy Kerr envisaged a high voltage supply of electricity to accommodate an increase in usage.

As no further questions were raised, Councillor Fitzpatrick thanked Andy Kerr for stepping in at such short notice.

## **5. EMILY ABBOT, DEPUTY MANAGER, HEALTHWATCH YORK**

Emily Abbot gave a presentation about the role of Healthwatch York which was set up in April 2013 to give a voice to the people of York with regard to health and social care issues. It “trades in stories” and relays residents queries or concerns to local health and social care providers and/or organisations (i.e. hospitals, pharmacies, dentists and social workers). It has 43 volunteers and six paid members of staff (one of whom is funded separately through a charity and is currently addressing how those with complex needs can be better supported). The primary aims of Healthwatch include:-

- Helping people share their views/concerns about health and social care
- Providing information and signposting
- Signposting people to independent complaints advocacy

Local events include:-

- Weekly market stall (Healthwatch runs it on the last Tuesday with other local groups using it during the other Tuesdays)
- Community/city events
- Regular information points
- Focus groups dealing with specific issues

Information includes:

- Magazines
- Leaflets
- Signposting service
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Guide
- Dementia Guide
- Website

All feedback gathered from local residents is collated every month and disseminated to the appropriate local health and social care providers and/or organisations.

## **6. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Residents were then given the opportunity to ask any questions.

One resident asked whether feedback was brought to the attention of the governors of York Hospital and Emily Abbot confirmed that it should be.

Another resident asked when the next edition of the guides would be available. Emily Abbot confirmed that (subject to funding) the Mental Health and Wellbeing Guide and Dementia Guide should be reprinted in 2020.

One resident expressed concerns with regard to Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust (TEWV) and enquired as to whether Healthwatch had liaised with them. Emily Abbot said that they hadn't had much to do with TEWV.

One resident praised the health services in York but expressed frustration at the inaccessibility of the Physiotherapy Department in Archways. Although he had raised this with York Hospital he had not received any response.

As no further questions were raised, Councillor Fitzpatrick thanked Emily Abbot for her input.

## **7. RED TOWER YORK/RIVER FOSS SOCIETY/WALMGATE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

The chairman of Red Tower York then proceeded to give an overview of the work being carried out at the Red Tower by a group of volunteers (aided by donations/ funding) who have brought it back into public use. Red Tower York was taken over from the Friends of York Walls in 2015 and since its restoration in March 2018 it has attracted many visitors and boasts internet access, a cafe (pay as you feel), crafts and a supermarket surplus shop. It is currently open every Monday 11:30 – 14:00

- 1<sup>st</sup> Monday - Healthwatch
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday – Guildhall Councillors Surgery and Citizens Advice
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday – Older Citizens Advocacy York (OCAAY) and York Learning
- 4<sup>th</sup> Monday – Police/BID Rangers and MySight York

The Treasurer of the River Foss Society then provided an update to residents with regard to the interpretive panel which has been installed near Monk Bridge and confirmed that they have received a grant for some weeping willow trees which they intend to plant along the River Foss. They also intend to submit an application for replacement outdoor seating.

A representative from Walmgate Community Association spoke of the installation of new flower beds in Walmgate. However, she said that they were trying to recruit more volunteers for future projects. She expressed concern that they had not been informed of work recently carried out in Dick Turpin's Park (particularly as they would have liked to have involved local residents in decision making) and suggested that better communication was needed from City of York Council.

Councillor Fitzpatrick thanked all three representatives and agreed that it would be a good idea to invite representatives from The Groves Association to future ward meetings.

## 8. GUILDHALL COMMITTEE UPDATES

### Presentation of Past Projects

Councillor Craghill referred residents to the twenty projects set out in the agenda (totalling £24,992.22). She also confirmed that additional funding (£16,000) was available to improve safety within the community (i.e. CCTV, fencing, neighbourhood watch etc). The Highways capital funding (£134,000 spread over a four year period) could be used for local projects (i.e. bollards, road surfacing and a zebra crossing on Haxby Road).

### Ward Budgets

Councillor Craghill then provided an update on the ward budget and, as funding was available, she asked residents for any ideas of projects or schemes which would benefit the local community. She referred residents to the application forms (which were displayed on a nearby table) and asked them to contact Laura Redhead (Community Involvement Officer) if they had any ideas.

### Ward Priorities

- To increase recycling
- Better maintenance of parks and green spaces
- Reduction of antisocial behaviour
- For children to be able to play out safely
- Fewer people suffering from loneliness.
- For people to embrace diversity in their communities

Councillor Looker said it was worth revisiting priorities as it was important to see ambitions with a rootedness in achievability and to decide if any could be better tweaked.

One resident didn't like the wording of the first priority but preferred 'Creating a greener Guildhall'.

Another resident said there were too many priorities and felt that it would be better to have fewer priorities (i.e. mental health and safety) but with a greater focus on each one.

Councillor Craghill felt that although there had been improvements with regard to recycling, all of the priorities needed to be developed further.

One resident commented that the Fossgate redevelopment was a beautiful area but made everything else look dreadful.

### Presentation from Planning Panel

Councillor Fitzpatrick then invited a representative from the Guildhall Planning Panel to speak. The representative said that the panel discussed issues affecting local residents (i.e. traffic management parking, charging points etc). Minuted meetings are held every three weeks to go through all the applications and although they are well attended they could do with more people coming along.

He went on to state that their views were quite conservative and generally consistent (but that they would welcome other views). The Spark development generated the most dissent but ended up having majority support.

A resident asked how much influence the panel had with regard to decision making. The representative confirmed that the panel was a formal consultative body (although without specific areas of expertise) and that the City of York Council was obliged to take their views on board.

At this point, Councillor Fitzpatrick let residents know that they could also contact her (as a panel member) if they had any queries or concerns so she could raise them at future panel meetings.

A representative from the Walmgate Community Association commented that they were first established at the same as the Willow House application and that if they had been more organised they would have objected to the closure of the green space in the front (although they didn't object to the use of the building). Again, she reiterated the importance of communicating with residents in advance. In response, the panel representative confirmed that the panel obtained residents views then disseminated them to City of York Council

Another resident pointed out that due to the current purdah, the representative should clarify what he meant by their views being "conservative". The representative assured everyone that the panel were not politically conservative.

At this point, three new members were voted in.

## **9. HAVE YOUR SAY**

Councillor Fitzpatrick invited another representative of Red Tower York to talk about a project involving local parents. He said that the core impulse came after some local mums asked for a playground so that they and their children could meet together and socialise. By empowering parents the aim was to focus on poverty reduction and improve the lives of young people (starting with children aged 0-2 years). Funding of £4,500 had also been donated by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust.

Residents were then invited to raise any other queries or concerns.

One resident was concerned by the way in which Parliament Street had changed for the worse with the loss of the Splash Palace, radar toilet, fountain, some seating and two trees. He also felt that vast areas of stone had been replaced by tarmac. He held 'Make It York' partly responsible and felt that priority had been given to the St Nicholas Fair traders at the expense of local shops. He was also saddened by the news that Barnitts have had to reduce their floor space.

At this point it was suggested that representatives from 'Make It York' should be invited to the next Guildhall Ward meeting which was met with

widespread approval. Councillor Fitzpatrick also mentioned that they were in consultation with market traders and that traders in Jubbergate had expressed concern about their future. She also felt that St Nicholas Fair finished too soon (i.e. on 23 December 2019).

Councillor Craghill reiterated that it would be a good idea to invite 'Make It York' to discuss their objectives. She also said that a seating project was underway in the ward to assess the state of seating and whether more was required.

One resident commented that 'Make It York' always had grand plans but tended not to consult with residents.

Another resident lamented the wholesale removal of seating in Parliament Street and King's Square (particularly as he previously enjoyed sitting on the bench in King's Square to eat his fish and chips). He felt that cafe owners who used outside space for their tables should allow members of the public to use their lavatories (although, in response, another resident said that ownership of land extended to the centre of the road).

Laura Redhead was asked for suggestions on how to encourage more residents to attend future Guildhall Ward meetings. She said that they already informed residents through Twitter and on the City of York Council website. However, other suggestions included sending e-mails to residents, providing regular attendees with ten leaflets each (which they could then distribute them to other local residents) and asking BBC Radio York to announce the meetings in advance.

Councillor Fitzpatrick then praised Laura Redhead for her dedication and hard work (for which she was applauded).

As no further queries or concerns were raised Councillor Fitzpatrick thanked everyone for attending the meeting which ended at 21:00.

Cllr Fitzpatrick, Chair

[The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 9.00 pm].