

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WIGSTON RESIDENTS' FORUM HELD AT/BY
COUNCIL OFFICES, BUSHLOE HOUSE, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON, LEICESTERSHIRE,
LE18 2DR ON WEDNESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2022 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM**

PRESENT

G A Boulter Chair

COUNCILLORS

L A Bentley
K J Loydall



Meeting ID: 2267

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

T Hatton (Head of Customer Service and Transformation)
T Maccabe (Anti-Social Behaviour Officer)
S Moseley (Customer Service Improvement Manager)
M Smith (Community Safety & Youth Officer)

20. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from;

- PC G Morgan (Leicestershire Police)
- Cllr. Mrs H E Loydall
- Cllr. Mrs S B Morris
- M Walters (Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service)

21. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 24 August 2022, 7pm were declared true and accurate with the below noted;

- Point 12: P Fisher is noted as having presented the Vision for the Borough, but was not present at the meeting. This was actually given by R Levy.
- Point 14: A question was previously raised around what happened to collected recycling in the Borough which was not answered in the previous meeting. It was confirmed that the Borough's recycling does remain in this Country.

22. POLICE UPDATE

Emailed update from PC Gareth Morgan, Wigston Beat Team:

There has been a brief spike in burglaries but Police patrols and enquiries made seem to have made this a brief issue.

ASB continues to be reported around school children coming to and from the schools. The

beat team are continuing to speak with the school where it has been mentioned on an assembly to warn all pupils and patrols are ongoing. Several children have also been spoken to by officers and PCSO's to warn about behaviours.

Speeding continues to be reported as an issue in several areas of Wigston. Arrangements are currently being made with Police volunteers and other members of the beat team to see if a speeding operation can be conducted. Patrols continue and drivers being spoken to about actions witnessed.

Escooters continues to be a problem and advice being given to users of them to confirm knowledge of them being illegal in public places and the consequences of actions. The beat team will continue to run a policy of first time advice, second time warn and if a third time for the same rider it will be removed from them.

The beat has not been covered to the same levels over the last month to 6 weeks due to operational demands for the well-publicised problems in the East of Leicester. Hopefully, patrols will now be returning to normal. Could I also encourage that anyone who is not currently signed up to Neighbourhood link makes contact with myself, Giustine or Jen in order that we can enter you on to our system as a lot of future engagement will be completed on this platform.

Cllr.Loydall noted a recent spate of burglaries in the Wigston area which he confirmed arrests have been made against. Unfortunately further details could not be provided due to ongoing work on the arrests made.

23. LFRS UPDATE

This item was deferred due to apologies received.

24. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

T Hatton and S Moseley gave a presentation on the Customer Experience Strategy consultation, summarised in the attached document.

A question was asked as to why the Strategy was a three-year strategy, and not a two-year strategy. It is felt that a three-year strategy, with an inbuilt annual review, provided the most effective approach. The strategy is supported by an action plan, with most actions expected to be completed within the first year.

Attendees heard, following a comment by a resident, that 'Digital by Default' is not intended to fully replace a face to face or paper-based option; this is to ensure that everyone's voice has an equal opportunity to be heard. It was noted that this is especially important for the Borough's aging population.

The importance of face-to-face availability of Officers during an emergency, or more urgent, situation was also stressed in relation to the Customer Experience Strategy, with examples given of individuals who have previously attended Bushloe House seeking support when they are unsure of other contact routes. T Hatton noted that the proposal for a publicly accessible reception at Brocks Hill is intended to address this, and provide appropriate support. The intercom present at Bushloe House was also mentioned as a measure to support individuals in more urgent situations, however it was acknowledged that this is not a perfect system and is currently being looked into.

A question was asked regarding how many Customer Services Officers are employed by

the Council, and where they are currently working. It was confirmed that most officers are working from home, although a hybrid approach is in place where officers work from the office. There are currently 10 full-time equivalent officers employed in the Customer Services Team, with two managers. This is sufficient at present for the quantity of calls the Council receives. Queries were raised around if this would be sufficient if a web chat approach was adopted by the Council, with officers being "tied up" on multiple virtual chats at once; it was noted that there are software options available that will enable web chats to be queued, similar to how calls can be at present, to enable officers to focus on one web chat at a time and provide a quality service to the customer. All routes of contact with Customer Services will be dealt with by the same team of officers to ensure a consistent customer experience.

25. CHAIR'S UPDATES

There will be a Remembrance Service in Peace Memorial Park, Wigston on 11 November, commencing at 10:45am. On Sunday, 13 November the Remembrance Parade will take place, commencing at Elizabeth Court and ending at All Saints Church, Wigston for a service. This will be the first parade for two years, due to Covid, and is expected to be busy.

Wigston's Christmas Lights Switch-On will take place on 26 November, with a fair also present on Bell Street. A Christmas shop window competition will also be running across the Borough. A query was raised around displays in empty shops, but it was noted the landlords for these units are not forthcoming regarding this.

26. ITEMS RAISED BY RESIDENTS

A query was raised around would the Council have a contact centre for the public to visit once Bushloe House closes. The Chair confirmed that a location would be available for pre-booked, face to face appointments with Council Officers, with Wigston Library being a potential venue. This was covered further detail in the Customer Experience Strategy Agenda Item.

The future of Residents' Forums after the move to Brocks Hill was also questioned, with the Chair confirming that they will continue at an alternate venue within each settlement area.

A query was raised around 'Warm Hubs' in the Borough during the Winter months. The Fire Station will be providing one alongside the churches in the Borough. The Kings Centre on Bull Head Street will also be operating one, and there is an ongoing conversation around the use of the Council's community buildings. Wigston Library is also being considered as a venue by Leicestershire County Council. It is unknown what the demand will be of these Warm Hubs by the public.

The reform of the Residents' Forums proposed in 2017, and the existence of the mailing list for attendees was raised. It was noted that several officers who have previously facilitated the forums have left the Council, and some corporate knowledge has been lost. The mailing lists for the Forums are being updated, and attendees at tonight's meeting are able to provide their email address on a signing-in form.

The Bell Street gate has been unlocked for seven weeks to date, with the padlock missing, and various services such as GroupFour and a window cleaner are now accessing Bell Street. This will be raised with the appropriate officers within the Council on the next

working day following this meeting. The gate does belong to the Council, but the pedestrianised area of Bell Street falls under the control of Leicestershire County Council.

The Star and Garter pub on Leicester Road has installed a fence along what is thought to be the pavement, limiting pedestrian space when cars are parking against it, signage denotes the area against the fence as 'Customer Parking Only'. It is unclear if planning permission has been granted for this, and will be raised with the appropriate officers at the Council the next working day following this meeting. Leicestershire County Council Highways will also be alerted to this.

Freer Park has had its tyre swing replaced which has been noted as a positive update.

An attendee noted a 'near fatal accident' was avoided outside Water Leys Primary School where a child was nearly struck by a vehicle reversing into the school's driveway. The pavement outside the school has been measured at 1.25m by the attendee, stating that the path is too narrow for how busy it is at the start and end of the school day, and struggles to accommodate double-pushchairs. It was asked if the road could be made one way. It was noted that this falls under the remit of Leicestershire County Council Highways, and may require cooperation with the school to potentially move their fence line back to accommodate a wider pavement. The County Councillor for the area will also be made aware of this.

Dropped curbs in the same area as noted above appear to be missing at sensible intervals for individuals in wheelchairs, mobility scooters, or with pushchairs to be able to cross the road safely or without significant detour. Leicestershire County Council Highways will be made aware of this to look into. A dropped curb on Repton Road was also raised as a concern for safety, as it has a significant drop compared to the rest of the Highway; this also falls under the remit of Leicestershire County Council Highways.

Concerns were also raised around an individual in the Burleigh Avenue area who regularly parks numerous cars, flatbed vehicles and trailers around the area to the frustration of residents. This has been reported to the Council and other agencies on a number of occasions, but through investigation no action has been able to be taken. Cllr. Loydall noted that reports, with accompanying evidence, need to be made to the relevant authority with the power to take appropriate action which is not always the Borough Council.

Traffic light sequences at the junction of Station Road and Pullman Road, and the congestion they cause, was raised at tonight's meeting too. It was confirmed by the Chair that this issue has already been reported to Leicestershire County Council Highways for investigation. It was noted by the Chair that as part of the planning application for HMP Fosse Way the traffic lights, and overall traffic, between the site of the prison and Bull Head Street would be looked at, however it has since transpired that this was never actioned. With the planning application for an additional building at the prison site now present at Blaby District Council the opportunity has arisen for this condition to be reviewed, and reinstated.

Air quality / pollution monitoring devices are also present in the Borough, with one currently sited outside the cycle shop on Blaby Road, South Wigston. These are being monitored at present as a means to address 'Children's Wheeze' in young people. None of the levels are currently high enough to warrant an air quality enforcement area.

A question was asked regarding a tree intended for planting to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee which was awarded funding at a previous meeting of this forum; this will be

reviewed at the Council meeting on 15 November.

An attendee raised a concern around the condition of Oadby Cemetery, noting that it is “a tip” at present. Some of the issues raised around the absence of footpaths in the cemetery were noted to be linked to the limited space there, and the need to remove some pathways to suit additional burials. It is believed that Oadby Cemetery currently has five years of space left before it is full. Options are being looked at across the Borough regarding cemetery space, with some graves over 100 years old to be reviewed for reinstatement where possible.

27. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 15 February 2023 – 7:00pm

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.15 pm



Chair

Wednesday, 15 February 2023

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The consultation will run from 2 November 2022 – 14 December 2022, and is open to residents, businesses and key stakeholders. All returns will be considered along with our existing information to form our Customer Experience Strategy.

Introduction

The way customers access services from both the public and private sector has been changing rapidly for many years and this change has only been accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

More and more customers prefer to engage by digital means with face-to-face contact dropping as a result. The demand for more advanced and improved digital services is growing but there continues to be some demand – often from the most vulnerable in our borough – to offer face-to-face support.

Prior to the pandemic, face-to-face Customer Services in Oadby & Wigston was based at our Customer Service Centre in Bell Street, Wigston. This offered a reactive drop-in service handling all types of council enquiries but has now closed as operating it became unsustainable.

Since the pandemic our service has transferred to telephony/online channels.

In spring 2023, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council will relocate its primary offices to Brocks Hill Country Park, Oadby. The borough council sees this as an ideal opportunity to re-evaluate our customer service offering and develop a new Customer Experience Strategy, which will be reviewed on an annual basis.

We are driven to find to the correct balance between encouraging and advancing our digital customer service offer while also ensuring those that are unable to contact us in this way have direct access to the support they need.

The proposals below capture this, presenting a balanced approach that also fits in with the financial challenges all councils are currently facing.

Proposals

Element 1 – Establishing a well-balanced, high-quality digital, phone and face-to-face customer service offer.

We are proposing to undertake a review of our face-to-face Customer Service provision.

The proposed service model focuses on the council's digital approach but also makes significant allowance for those customers - who are often the most vulnerable in our borough - that require more direct support, including face-to-face contact.

Our main proposals are:

- To promote, encourage and support a digital-first model in acknowledgement that most customers prefer to self-serve using the council's digital offer – such as the website.
- To continue to provide an excellent supported service offer by telephone, email, virtual video appointment and similar.
- To increase our face-to-face offering, considering appointment hubs, home visits, and a reception facility at our new head office.

As our primary council offices will be moving to Brocks Hill County Park, we could consider making this a base for an appointment hub in Oadby. If appointment hubs are a popular approach, we could consider additional hubs in Wigston and South Wigston. Customers would need to pre-book appointments by telephone.

Under consideration and pending the outcomes of this consultation there is the potential that the reception area in Brocks Hill will also be staffed by an officer. It is envisaged that customers could drop in to get help with quick/basic council enquiries such as:

- Booking the customer an appointment (if needed)
- Accepting dropped off forms/documentation
- Signposting customers to help/advice services

Element 2 – Enhancing and maximising our digital customer service offer

Customers now more than ever are looking for quick and easy ways to get answers to their enquiries. The council is committed to being ‘digital by default’ and it is important that we explore better ways of using technology to serve the customers that prefer to use digital channels.

If there is a need, we plan to introduce a web chat offer that will allow customers to ‘chat’ directly to our customer services team through our website.

We also plan to enhance and improve our online forms.

Have your say

We want to hear your views on the future of our customer services, gathering information and opinions on how you prefer to access these services. To have your say, please complete our survey:

- On our website at: www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/consultations
- By completing a paper form. Please ring the Customer Service Team on 0116 288 8961 to request one.

If assistance is required in completing the questionnaire please call our Customer Service Team who can complete this form over the telephone with you.

Access to services statement

The council values the diversity of the community and visitors to the borough and wants its services to be accessible to all. In doing so the council will strive to ensure fair and equal treatment by seeking to ensure that the principles of fairness and equality of opportunity underpin all its policies, procedures and practices.