

<http://www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/Cheshire/Neston/CH64/News/Local-News/144174-Cheshire-West-Councillors-host-a-lively-Forum-in-Neston>

Cheshire West Councillors host a lively Forum in Neston

Cheshire West and Chester Council's latest local area Community Forum took place at Neston Town Hall today.

Split into two halves, the event comprised a drop-in session first, where local people were invited to come and speak to Officers and Members of the authority about issues that concern them in the area, followed by a presentation on the current Neston Town Centre development.

The event was well attended, presumably due in no small part to the ongoing interest in the progress and effects of the Sainsbury's development and surrounding works.

Cllr Gareth Anderson (Ledsham & Willaston) chaired the second part of the Forum, introducing a panel made up of: Paul Friston (Development Management), Noel O'Neill (Head of Facilities & Asset Management), Cllr Kay Loch (Neston & Parkgate) and Richard Nickson (Highways and Transportation). Also at the event were Councillors Scott Mealor (Neston & Parkgate), Myles Hogg and Graham Smith (both Ledsham & Willaston).



Highlights of the issues covered during the presentation

- Sainsbury's are aiming to be open by 2010, and CWaC are in discussions with them regarding not just the build, but about how the site is managed once it's complete, and how Sainsbury's will engage with the authority and the community. This will include issues such as employment and employee parking.

- CWaC are working closely with the developers to ensure vehicular movement relating to the development is managed correctly. Access to the town for site traffic should be via Liverpool Road, not Hinderton Road. If residents have any concerns regarding this, please let either your local Councillor or the main Council offices know.
- Around half of the Section 106 money (£750,000 paid by Sainsbury's to be spent in the immediate area) has been spent or committed. The rest has not yet been committed and CWaC intends to work closely with Neston Town Council and the community to decide on how it should be spent. For example, the Chamber of Trade would like to see some money spent on marketing the rest of the town to ensure that local businesses can benefit from the increased footfall heading for Sainsbury's once it is open.
- ALDI have implemented a 1½ Hour limit on parking in the half of the Ladies Walk car park nearest to the store. They also now own the other half of the car park, having purchased it from Network Rail, but parking on that half remains free of charge. CWaC will look into how secure the agreement is for this to remain as unrestricted car parking, and to ensure that clear signage is erected to guide motorists correctly.

Issues raised from the floor

The meeting was then opened up for questions to be raised by meeting attendees, who included members of the public along with representatives from Neston Town Council, ch64inc, Neston Civic Society, neston.org.uk and Neston & District Chamber of Trade.



Some of the issues raised were:

What happened to the Capital Receipts?

A number of attendees wished to clarify what had happened to the £2.2 million paid by Sainsbury's to lease the land for the development. Many believed this to have been ring-fenced for spending in the area. However, it was explained that, as is required by law, all Capital Receipts paid to Cheshire West and Chester Council are available for expenditure throughout the Authority's area.

However, local Councillors are working hard in various ways to identify projects in the CH64 area that need investment. Examples include investment in the infra-structure of our schools and leisure facilities, and the need for improved transport links.

It was pointed out that a consultation took place in February this year - "Our CH64" - aimed at finding out which projects local people would like to see investment in, and that Neston Town Council have recently compiled a list of potential projects for local improvements. Councillor Anderson also encouraged people to bring their ideas to the regular Community Forums, or to the attention of their Ward Councillors.

How are the Parking issues being addressed?

Parking on the Sainsbury's development site will allow for 235 spaces (there were originally 190 spaces on the Raby Road Car Park). There will be a three hour time limit for parking in these spaces.

Sainsbury's will be required, as is the norm for any supermarket development of this size, to produce an employee travel plan.

It was confirmed that there are currently no plans to put any time restrictions on the other car parks in the Town Centre. Cheshire West and Chester are about to undertake a parking review throughout their patch, but any proposals to make changes to parking arrangements in Neston will be opened to public consultation.

How will the new development affect future transport plans for the area?

Richard Nickson explained that the current Local Transport Plan ends next year and that a consultation has just been launched on Local Transport Plan 3 which will commence in 2012. The Government wants the Authority to provide a three year implementation plan and a fifteen year "vision."

Also under revision will be the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework, so consultation on all three issues will be run concurrently.

All aspects of transport will be under review, including road and rail, and the Authority are keen to explore ways of encouraging more walking, cycling and use of public transport, particularly in the Rural West Local Area Partnership Board that Neston forms a significant part of, given that a third of the total population of Rural West reside in the CH64 postcode area.

A member of the public raised the issue of the lack of locations to park and secure bicycles in the Town Centre. It was agreed that this would be looked into, but it was also pointed out that new cycle racks are to be installed at Neston railway station.

Can something be done about the problem of motorists parking on pavements?

Mr Nickson agreed that this is a problem throughout the CWaC area, that it is both anti-social and endemic. During the open forum earlier in the morning, the issue had been discussed with a number of people and it was agreed that a community-driven approach to resolving this might be an option. Discussions will continue, to look at ways in which, for example, Neston Town Council and ch64inc might be able to help.

Communications

A request was made that the regular updates on the Town Centre developments should be made available online on a day-by-day basis. Currently, the weekly updates are posted immediately on both AboutMyArea and neston.org.uk, with the editors of both websites making it known that they are willing to continue hosting both these updates and any other information about meetings and consultation exercises.

It was also suggested that issues raised at these regular Community Forums should be reported on at future meetings, so that people can clearly see what has already come up, and how these issues are being progressed or resolved.

Councillor Anderson agreed that this is something the Ward Councillors are very keen to implement, and that they will revise and update issues on an ongoing basis.