

Transcription of Public Meeting, Thursday 21st September 2006

Andy Goldring welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the agenda items and asked for respectful listening and participation from everyone. “CCCAG is a work in progress... tonight the main thing is not really about dwelling on the past... but more about looking to the future. Seeing how, if we co-operate with each other and get creative, what we could do in Chapeltown will make a big difference to the place we live. All of us here are local residents – we want the best for our kids, our old people, ourselves... the main thing is to get talking, seeing who wants to get involved and how, over the next few months, over the next year or two, we can create something that’s really good for Chapeltown.”

Cath from Chapeltown Community Centre Action Group gave a presentation about the community centre project which they are working on and the history of their group. During the presentation, a group of people interrupted to make the following points....

- They’re your ideas not our ideas
- You talk about consultation – why don’t you talk to us?
- What about the kids ideas?
- That building you’re talking about looks an awful like this building here (HOST) and other buildings in the area
- ¾ of us will be dead by the time this happens, you have to be realistic about what you’re doing
- We’ve got a dance school there, we gave £3.5 million to that school, and there’s not one kid locally that goes there, you have to wait 12 months to get your child on a Saturday school, that isn’t for our community
- Too many decisions get made without the kids, by the time this gets finished a lot of us might not be here, so the only ones that should really count is the kids
- Right now, round here it’s very dangerous for guns and drugs, it’s pointless everyone pottering round and pretending, it’s dangerous for all the things that kids can get dragged into, that’s what we need to deal with.
- These kids need a ‘building of progress’. We need to tell them ‘whatever you’re good at, you come here and we will develop it’
- The same people are making the same decisions over and over again.
- You’re right that these things don’t happen overnight, but unless you have a stamp of approval and start saying what this is really about, none of this counts, it’s going through the same motions
- We have to acknowledge the right stuff. Too many people keep having these discussions, spending money on this, money on that, and it’s not doing nothing for the kids.
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AG - It’s a fair point, there’s a lot of frustration that a lot of the facilities that we need aren’t available – we’ve been working really hard to try and get those facilities.

- Hopefully, these young children here will be the ones who carry this on.

At this point I gave up as all the points were merely being repeated for the next 20 minutes and not a great deal was audible over the shouting.

DVD 2

Rory Barke: Good evening and thanks for inviting me here this evening – I’m Rory Barke the Leeds City Council NE Area manager with responsibility for this area – a big wedge of Leeds going right out to Wetherby, and I have got a small team of people to help me with our work ...we help service the area committees. I’m going to be as brief as possible... want to listen.

I was asked to explain what is a Joint Service Centre... Rory gives presentation...

- What is a Joint Service Centre...

- Where will it be located...
- What health services will be provided at the centre...
- What council and other services will the JSC provide?
- Current estimates of space... Section 106 ...
- Footprint of JSC... no planning as yet...this is the maximum space JSC will require...in 100% of cases to date they have reduced...

- Chapeltown Community Facilities Review
- Review as result of deputation to full council by CCCAG
- To see whether or not best way forward is to make an offer of land for the community centre as it is being proposed
- If decided centre is needed, then options appraisal would be undertaken...
- Back to JSC...
- As part of planning process there needs to be further public consultation... open by Autumn 2008

Comments

- Its staggering isn't it that you can stand up and give us a proposal about something you have already decided to do, without giving us a piece of land What we need is a commitment that we will get a space that we can build our futures on ... irrespective of how much you pay yourselves to decide what we want, and then to ask afterwards whether its what we want... I suspect that if you added up all the wages it would be much more than the million and a half pounds needed for the centre

- Why are we going to waste our lives as volunteers – I wanted this (Community centre) for my teenage daughter to have somewhere to go, now I want somewhere for my grandson to go to... at the rate this is going it will be way past it for him and I'll have to work on it for my great grandchildren to make use of!
- Autumn 2008 is not when we will get what we want – a new community centre, it is when you will get what you want....Applause
- You have an opportunity here to not have a paper policy and to put some of your vision for Leeds into commitment, to do something real for Chapeltown.
- The proof of what she says is true is that you say it will be open Autumn 2008, that is only 18 months away, 2008 is the evidence ...
- Its not been described to me so can you point out on the map where the Hayfield centre is (pointed out) Is that it? And they want to take all the rest is for cars? That's not right, we don't want all them cars.
- You want to take all that green space for cars, but where is the green space going to go? Where are all the children to come outside and play.
- Its only 26 visitor's car parking spaces.
- Where on there is the community centre going then? There has been lots of consultation by the action group and we've told them we want it and we want it on that site, so where abouts on that site is it going?
- (Andy Goldring) I think the answer at the moment is that this proposal does not include any space for a community centre at the moment.
- Can I just say.. I live in the community... I am a council tax payer... and as a council tax payer can I say that you are quick enough to give us what you want to give us but you're not quick enough at giving us what we want. In this community we want our community centre back.
- Who are Leeds LIFT exactly?
- (Rory Barke) They are the company that has been established to build it.
- I have been in the building trade all my working life and I've worked in Leeds a lot of it, and I've never heard of Leeds LIFT ltd.
- (Cath Muller) Can I tell you what we've heard as.... Interruptions...
- Rory Barke – Leeds lift was established to build the Joint Service Centres in Leeds and it will lease the building back to the council and to the PCT over a period of 25 years and that's how they make

their money. Leeds LIFT Ltd will use the PFI credits in order to construct the building. It's a company that hasn't been around a long time because it's a company that has been formed in order to progress the actual building

- It is a PFI – a Private Finance Initiative. That's when a private consortium come in and, on a public area, where there may have been a public building, and put together a building, which they manage, and then they lease it back to the council at quite a reasonable rent for them (the consortium) so that the people who were managing it and running it on our behalf now are paying our tax-payers money so that that place can be built. And once you've signed the lease and there's a service agreement, it is very, very, very difficult to make any changes (eg. Out of hours groups at Lawnswood School having to renegotiate to pay fees) because, by law, private companies have to make as much money as they can.
- Is that like what happened to this building (HOST)?
- Question to Rory - What was the consultation with local people that said they wanted a Joint Services Building? Where did local people ask for that? (lots of shouting, shouts of 'none')
- It's because we're walking around looking black. It's the same thing in Seacroft – they put a Joint Services Centre in there... (inaudible) same here, they don't want you in town because you look threatening.
- Ann Allcock (in response to question) – I'm aware that the council wanted to build on its successful One Stop Centres that it has around the city. I'm aware that they identified that there were up to 9 communities still, that it felt would benefit from having council services more accessible to those communities, to help people. Yes, it's a Private Finance Initiative, that money is funding the council element of this building, not the PCT element and if we lose the PFI credits, we lose the Joint Service Centres in all three communities. The council has no other money. If you believe the council needs other money, that's a different route, I can't answer that. When we were saying there were 9 communities and we got enough money to build 3 and therefore there was research done to establish whether we were still correct in the assumption that those 9 communities would benefit most. As part of that we went through the customer services focus group ,which was people in the communities, in the city, who gave up their time to come and tell us what we did wrong and so that we could do it better. We used that focus group to say 'we've got some money which will help us build some more of these One Stops, alongside health and we've got one up at St George's Centre in Middleton (19'55'' on video)...(lots of her explanation left out – she says something about the timescale being very short and not having enough time to consult people in all 9 communities)
- Of course you've got the time, that's what you always do, you collect our council tax, you don't let nobody slip through the net and then you don't have time to come and ask us. (He shouts a lot, cuts across and swears – Ann says she is sorry that he is disrespecting her).
- Ann listed the ways she has tried to keep the community informed. If at the end of the day, the community doesn't support this Joint Service Centre, then it's not going to be used and there's no point building it.
- I'm getting confused – first of all, the leaflets said we were coming here to hear about the community centre. Now I haven't heard of this Joint Service Centre before. I attend focus group meetings, and I've not heard anything about it. Usually I attend all the meetings – I may have missed one or two, but I never heard about this. What I say – if you're going to do something like this, why don't you come to the people, discuss it like you're doing here. And then hear what we have to say and make the decision. It's not that we want to get at you – we want the best for our community, but we also like to know what is happening and when it's going to happen and having input into it. We don't want you to come and tell us 'we're building this and we're building that'. You all have taken all that land (interjection - 'for car park', clapping), even the piece of land that was the community centre before – and what's happening with that?
- Lots of shouting
- Actually there is a parking problem in the area, because more and more people are working in the area
- We don't object to the parking space, we don't expect... (inaudible)... we object to the amount of land that they're taking up for these hundred and odd cars, that's what we object to, why can't they give us a little bit more space for making the community centre – when they do give us anyway?

- It's almost a fait accompli. What we need to concentrate on is the space that is left. What concerns me is that the feasibility study that has been done is looking at whether or not the land should be allocated for a community centre. What concerns me about that is that there's no funding to actually build the community centre, and who's going to take on responsibility for that. Now CCCAG are talking about the centre being 'designed by, built by and owned by the people of Chapeltown', which is fine, but that then puts the responsibility on you to find the funding and I think there's a fundamental flaw in that. Since we're at this stage, what we need to be seeing is the local authority and the focus group – "Right, this is the land that's there, this is obviously what the people want, let's make it happen."
- Edwina – makes a point about the council saying they don't have any money, and yet there are buildings which they have closed down which now haven't been used for two years or more. The council departments aren't talking to each other, the land and buildings could be being used right now for community facilities, SureStart is looking at a huge deficit, kids are losing out in terms of council services and nothing is being done with these bits of land.
- There's money available, there's European Funding - there's a group in Sheffield building their own community centre, it's not about the community going and asking the council for bits of money every year, it's about the community being empowered to be a community. To live, work and play together and work together for our kids as well as us, just like what Loutell was saying – he's angry, because what our kids want is to live, work and play with us. It's about communities being empowered, not only in dealing with crime, but in education, in everything in Chapeltown – we should do it, because we live here, we know what's best for us.
- But the people that make the decisions for us is the people that do not live here. They've got no vested interest in the community apart from financial. We live here - this is our community, this is what we want, not what you want. We pay our council taxes, and I'm sure that at the end of the day, when you've built your building and you've done your One Stop, you're gonna put our taxes up to sort you out.
- Who exactly owns the land?
- Andy Goldring – as far as I'm aware it's still the council. I think that what happens is that, if planning permission is gained, Leeds City Council will sell the land to the LIFT company.
- We need to decide what can be done about it – we know what the community wants, so we need to decide how we can get on and do that. Is it a foregone conclusion?
- Andy Goldring – the LIFT company is having public meetings – go along to those. If you object to the centre, write an objection to planning. One of the things that the CCCAG has been working on is to develop a community centre. The fact that there's this JSC has made it a whole lot harder, because everyone's been saying 'we can't give you any decisions until that's been organised'. We're not against improving health services, education services, all these different services in the community. That's not our place to be against it. If the community is against it, it needs to say that. But what we're for is a community centre. We think there's probably room for both.
- When this gentleman (Rory) gave his presentation, I'm sure he said that the JSC land/Hayfield land is council land, but I didn't hear him say that the old community centre land belonged to the council as well.
- Andy Goldring – yes it does, all the land does.
- We should have been given it five years ago, we'd have got the place built by now.
- We've got builders in this community
- Cllr Hamilton talks about why Frankland Place has been closed and been getting dilapidated for so long, loads of enquiries, Social Services are not prepared to make a decision on it yet.
- If the JSC is built, people probably will use it, and we'll all go back to this passive, not-really-caring-what-happens-in-our-community kind of a mode. This is a real opportunity to behave a bit differently and to actually be a bit more proactive and not just say 'do what you like, and we'll just lump it'. It will probably get used, but it won't help Chapeltown to become a more exciting place to live.
- The second thing I want to say is that greenspace is so precious, that if the council want to build on it, they need to offset that by finding greenspace somewhere else. Now there's this hugely, hugely valuable greenspace at the heart of Chapeltown, with mature trees there that'll be cut down if this is

built and would take several hundred years to grow back. To me, to give that away, when it's such an enormously valuable resource, so valuable that it has to be compensated for by law, is an absolute travesty and if the community centre has a proposal that will protect that greenspace, that's what I'm going to say yes to. I'm really against any proposal that does not protect the greenspace that's there now. (much clapping and shouts of agreement)

- 106 legislation is not adequate – you cannot say we'll better Buslingthorpe and Potternewton parks because we taking all that for cars for people who don't even live in the area. 106 legislation is more silver-tongued politician talk, we're not interested.
- Also – you can't afford to be defensive when we act defensive. We're defensive for a reason – you lot have got no reason to be defensive. You've got your wages, you humble yourselves to us, remember – it's not about us respecting you, it's about you respecting us.
- This centre can built and designed by the people of Chapeltown, using local labour, the lot, all it needs is... (inaudible)
- Just give us our space
- It seems to me that the opinions and the feelings of the community does not count. It doesn't count at all against bureaucracy. It's not right. It's our money and it's our community. You don't have to live here, we do.
- Andy Goldring – I would encourage everyone to go to the public meetings that the LIFT company will be holding. As soon as we find out [where and when], we'll let everyone know.
- Cath Muller – if you've left your name and address outside then you'll be on our mailing list and we can forward information to you.
- You shouldn't be doing that at your expense – they should be telling us.
- All the information that's been gathered tonight – what's going to happen to it and will you get back to us with what's going to happen.
- Andy Goldring – all the names and addresses that we've taken, not sure when our next newsletter's coming out, but almost certainly we'll be getting in touch with people very soon
- Cath Muller – we'll be trying to combine a write-up of this meeting, together with some stills from the video, and together with any other information that comes out and we'll send it out to everyone – it might take a few weeks.
- Andy Goldring – if people genuinely want a community centre then we need some support (shouts of yes – how many times to do we need to say it?)
- Cath Muller – we need people who want to help make it happen to come to our meetings and take on tasks, because there is so much to do.
- We want the land first ... (inaudible)... 2008.
- Cath Muller – I don't think that's necessarily true. If we have a design that everyone in Chapeltown has helped to make, that has facilities that everybody wants and nearly everybody is joining our group – if they say no to that, they're going to have a problem on their hands in Chapeltown, right?
- But they want theirs operating by 2008
- Cllr Hamilton – what I hear from you all – nobody's objecting to the building that's put there, but you're objecting to the amount of car space (lots of noise – disagreement?), I can't hear anybody saying they're objecting to it, I hear people objecting to the amount of car park because you want the land. (lots more shouting – 'are there objections to the JSC, that's the question'). The JSC at this moment is just a footprint. When it goes to planning everyone has their right to object if they do wish so.
- What difference will that make?
- Cllr Hamilton – objections make a big difference. Can I just assure you – the latest one was the Mansion Gate, there'd been a planning application to build 48 or so flats and the whole of that area objected and it got withdrawn, so objection does count. When that comes all, you can all have your say whether you want it there or not, but all I can hear, what we were saying on the CCCAG is that we want a bit of the land for a community centre. I didn't hear anyone saying from the action group that they don't want the JSC, what we want is the land. And they've proposed 108 (or whatever) car parking spaces – we're saying we want them to cut down on the car park, so that we can have land for the community centre – am I wrong? Therefore, when the planning goes through, myself & my

colleagues, we can send out every week 300 letters, informing you of when the planning is in, and you can object to all of it if you wish, or just bits of it.

- Planning should go through at the same time (as the community centre?)
- Cllr – that’s a very good point
- This leaflet says chapeltown community centre, hayfield site – and I didn’t know anything about this because I came to hear about the community centre. And it seems like there’s some kind of conspiracy that this has just slipped right into the meeting. And I don’t understand why that has slipped in here tonight, because that’s not what we came here to discuss. We don’t want that at the expense of the community centre. If it’s there, I mean everyone wants improvement in their lives, we want somewhere nice to go, nice doctor’s space and everything, but at the end of the day – it’s not either/or, it can’t be either/or – it’s got to be together, with.
- Andy – the reason we gave the LIFT Company the opportunity to give their presentation tonight, is because, quite clearly, that’s where the community centre was (pointing at map) and that’s where we wanted it (pointing at another bit of the map). Now, at the moment, there’s no space for the community centre, at the moment...
- (Interruption) why can’t you just push this lot down and put the community centre there (indicating to move the JSC/car parking further away from Chapeltown Road, to make room for the community centre). As for the car park – is it a fee-paying car park? Do we have to pay to put our cars in the car park? (shouting ‘yes’)
- Andy - The reason we gave an opportunity for the LIFT company to make a presentation is to show that there is a difficulty here
- But they’re not giving us any figures are they?... (Inaudible) ... they’re just putting money into the same old construction companies and paying each other their same (?/) wages over and over again, and they’re gonna waste more money (??) this plan, which they shouldn’t even put through, because it will be contested, so they know they’re only putting that through, so they can (write themselves a little story??) and vote it through and pay themselves more money, but it won’t go through like that
- Rory – I just wanted to make a distinction, if possible, between the process that’s going to build a JSC and the proposal that will go into planning to build this one, from the ideas behind a new community centre for Chapeltown, because they can be uncoupled if we weren’t talking about the same piece of land. So there is not a decision made, that I’m aware of, that you can’t have a new community centre (shout – ‘there is’), but there is a political decision to build a JSC on this site. For instance, I said in that list of people who’ll be in there, one of the people who’ll be in there will be the library. That library site then becomes an opportunity for some different sort of development. I’m not here saying it can’t be a community centre, what I am saying is that we’re doing a review that looks at all of the different community facilities and the proposals from the CCCAG, to see whether or not the politicians in the council think there’s a case for giving land at less than market value in order for a centre to be built. The point that I want to make is, that building this (JSC) does not stop the CCCAG still pressing a case for a new community centre (shouting).
- (Interruption) timescale, timescale here. You’re talking 2008, which is just next door, so what we talking? Pressing for what? It’s a forgone conclusion. Who we pressing at?
- Rory – the decision has been made to build a JSC, or to purchase this site for a JSC, (interruption – you see, you made the decision...inaudible), but it still has to have planning permission granted before it can be built and the points that have been made by your local councillors are correct, you can object through the planning process. All I’m trying to say is that doesn’t preclude, doesn’t mean you can’t carry on asking for a plan for a community centre.
- The decision to purchase that land was made three years ago, yes? (Rory – yes, when they Hayfield pub was purchased) So it has been 3 years in the planning to get to this stage. And we are just finding out about it now. We’ve got two more years to go before.... (everything inaudible due to loads of shouting)
- Rennie – what we are discussing here tonight is whether it’s feasible or not to access a piece of that land to build a proper centre to meet the needs of this community, that’s what we’re talking about. What we fear, Rory, is this. If it’s going to be achieved (...) what the community feel, the people I talk to..., it doesn’t matter how much we press, and we have been pressing for five years, to be told recently that we haven’t got a chance, in getting land to build a community centre (interruption - ...

people invite us to meetings to make them feel good), and the people of this community fear that it's all done and dusted. If you're going to achieve that in 2008, what chance have we got?

- They've invited to this meeting to make it plain and clear that then we were invited – it's not good enough. Do not invite me to meetings where everything's a foregone conclusion.
- They are going to do what they want to do. They said 'you been invited', and we don't accept it and we don't want it. Why you force it down our throat...
- I think it's really appalling that, as a community, we are not consulted when these decisions are made. 'Cos at the end of the day, we're paying taxes. And it's not right. When you're talking about bringing the community together what exactly do you want? 'cause this meeting is upsetting us, it's not doing anything. This should have been told, you should have told us from the beginning, not (...) it should have been brought out – is this what we want in our community. Not here, tonight. (...) Would you do that in Moortown? No, they wouldn't, so why are you doing it in Chapeltown? (...)
- Andy asks for a few more questions and then to bring the meeting to an end
- We want a community centre, that's what we want, that's why I come here.
- Inaudible comments about the land
- Rory – my understanding, and the point I was trying to make before, is that a decision has been made to try and progress building the JSC here, which can be objected to through the planning process that your councillors have alluded to. That's the decision that's been made and that's why officers are progressing that. So, at the moment, there's no decision to build a community centre on this site and there is actually an alternative decision to try and build a JSC. But that doesn't mean a community centre can't be built. What would happen, is if the politicians decided that it was a good idea to have a new community centre for Chapeltown and were willing to allowing land to go to the centre at less price than market price, then we would work with the community centre people and look at all the little plots of land there were (interjection – but we want that one), which I'm suggesting are around, to see which would be the best option.
- I was going to say, what's evident here, is that the amount of consultation that you community centre have pulled together on this idea for this community centre, it's a pity that that consultation wasn't done on the LIFT thing, because obviously there is a lot of interest here. The other side of it is that it is also evident from this group, because I think a brilliant opportunity was missed tonight, in what Loutell was saying. That no matter what we're talking about, the young people, they will inherit the whole of it, whether it's the community centre or this JSC/LIFT centre. It's a pity (hearing the lady speak) that, the groups that I work with of young people, have not been consulted about anything. And even in Rory's presentation of the LIFT centre, I didn't hear anything about young people at all. Maybe the services that come out of there will affect young people, but I didn't hear anything about that in the list of things, which I thought was disappointing. I think, taking your presentation, and listening to what the community says about the need for a community centre, I think it's true. But we also have to remember that one of the reasons that the community centre ended up being dysfunctional was because there wasn't enough parking space for it on Reginald Terrace, so I think the parking space you've got a point on. I was looking here and wondering, as a question, if that first Leeds City Council 3-storey block was moved to the back, which I don't know if it can be, then it would leave room for that community centre. But I think the idea of having somewhere to bring people into that whole complex that is seen as the community, without losing the greenspace, is absolutely crucial.

The other thing I wanted to ask is – the shops at the front – what's going to happen to them? Are we just gonna leave the shops as they are? Are we gonna spend all of this money behind it – but what are we going to do about the frontage? (Interjection – Leeds City Council ... knock them down) I think that it's important and that it's a good idea, that if you move the whole of that block up, and you brought the greenspace to the front, would that benefit the community? So I think there's some more consultation to be had, like you said, maybe moving some of those units around to accommodate. Then there was the discussion, you just mentioned I think, the library spot. Now, again this group hasn't had the chance to discuss that library spot, it might be an option. The council have presented it, I heard it presented here. So there's still room for discussion.

But I think it's a pity for me that there wasn't this type of energy at the consultation for the LIFT centre, because to me, I think there's things in that LIFT centre that may benefit the community and may not, but I think that consultation, I'm hoping that before... because 2008 is a very short time, when you think about it, that building is going to have to start for January of next year to be completed then. The other thing I was going to ask, because obviously we're not here to discuss the LIFT building, we're here to discuss the Chapeltown Community Centre, is can you make some guarantees, if all of that money's going to be spent building that, that some employment can be got for local people in the construction of it. (lots of shouting – inaudible)

- Rory – I can't stand up here and guarantee that, no. But what I can say is that it is council policy to try and insert local labour clauses into contracts, and it is something that's already been raised with the LIFT company that will build it. And we'll make every endeavour to make sure that there is local labour as part of the construction on the site, but I can't stand here and guarantee it, no.
- That's disappointing, because obviously we've been here before. We hear one group here talking about the building of a community centre and their willingness to make sure it's built by local people for local people, to empower local people. But we're going to have a bigger building, which, again, the best way to guarantee (because it sounds like the LIFT building's going to happen), the best way to guarantee the quickest use of that resource is to make sure that local people know what's going on, and if they're involved in the construction of it, then they will send out the message to other members of the community. And this comes back to Loutell, what Loutell was on about, because I understand he's frustrated, but, at the end of the day, what we're discussing is the future of our young people, and a lot of the time they are not being consulted. And they are groups now that are willing, you know young people will ask questions about what's going in there because, whether it's mental health, whether it's social services, it affects young people as well. I don't want people to leave this meeting thinking that what Loutell did was totally wrong. He's a frustrated young person, dealing with young people and you're talking about lots of money. When you're talking about building a LIFT centre or a community centre, you're talking about lots of money, somebody like him could do with £5000 to keep young kids off the road, when you're talking about millions it frustrates them. I think he made some valid points. I'm very much working with young people and they're going to inherit it all – is this going to be good for them in the future, it's them you need to be selling it to.
- I think, for me, when you get a meeting like this, all the time I've been going to meetings, and I've been going to meetings since 1975 as a young kid in Chapeltown, it was brilliant to see all of the different types of people that was in this meeting tonight and it's a long time since I've seen a meeting in this community that has so many stakeholders from this community – single mothers, children, parents, grandparents, and it was a pity we couldn't have held it together a bit more, so that they stayed. With Loutell, I'll go and see him, because at the end of the day what he was saying is he's looking for help. That was a cry more for help than a disruptive cry, and he didn't know how else to do it. But I think, especially on the LIFT thing, now it's going through.....
- Video runs out... ☺