

From: Roger Steel (Cllr) [mailto:Roger.Steel@nottinghamcity.gov.uk]
Sent: 19 September 2014 17:44
To: Stuart Knight
Cc: Timothy Spencer (Cllr); Pat Ferguson (Cllr); Adam Pickering; Georgina Culley (Cllr)
Subject: Wilford Library Informal Tender - CLLR MEETING Sept 10th

Stuart,

Further to the meeting of Ward Councillors & Portfolio Holder Cllr Chapman, on September 10th I wish to clarify my understanding of the discussions.

- The site was to be auctioned on July 10th on a freehold basis
- A Pre-Sale agreement was offered to Mr Kerry, on behalf of the Wilford Community, with usage limited to Community Use, a Post Office facility & Coffee Shop. This had been sanctioned by Cllr Chapman & Head of Property
- Mr Kerry had everything in place to exchange contracts prior to auction, all terms being pre-agreed.
- The offer to sell was withdrawn on Tuesday 8th July.

Following ward councillor intervention, a new proposal to invite bids based upon a community usage was requested by informal tender to be submitted by 25th July, based upon the terms detailed by Savills invitation to tender. This stipulated a Business Plan and Letters of Support, amongst other matters, and was offered on a 999 years Leasehold Basis.

- By it's nature this process prevented the Council from achieving the highest possible price on the open market on a freehold basis.
- Rather the provision of suitable community facilities was to be the main consideration - not price.

A meeting to review the bids with all Ward Councillors and Portfolio Holder Cllr Chapman & Head of Property was held on 10th September

- In the event two bids were submitted - Mr Kerry, on behalf of the Wilford Community, & West Bridgford Spiritualist Church.
- A report from Head of Property was offered to Cllr Chapman, which we understand compared the two bids.
- A synopsis of the 'Wilford Bid' was given by Cllr Steel, which indicated bids for a Freehold Sale and/or 999 year Leasehold offer.
- Cllr Chapman stated that a Freehold Offer would not be considered.
- No one spoke in respect of the other bid - other than to state that they were both similar in content, excluding price.
- No details of the other bid were given
- Cllr Chapman, as Portfolio Holder, decided to support the West Bridgford Spiritualist Church offer

I have reservations in respect of this process, and am unconvinced that the needs of the community will be met. You will recall that Wilford Community Group carried out a full comprehensive area survey to establish where? and what? community facilities should be provided.

Also as part of the bidding 'Letters of Support' were to be taken into account. Many such emails of support from Wilford notorieties and local organisations were submitted. It will be interesting to see how many? and from whom? the other bid received.

Cllr Chapman promised an open and transparent process, and in this regard we were to be given full details of the West Bridgford Spiritual Church bid, so we could see what proposals had been made for provision of community facilities. Also the officers comparison analysis/report. These are still awaited.

My scepticism was raised at Wilford Community Group meeting on Monday 5th September, when Cllr Ferguson referred to the site being a 'Spiritual Hub' when early notices posted stated that this would be a 'non-denominational' community facility, serving West Bridgford, Ruddington and Wilford areas. Until we see the details promised this cannot be verified.

I am also keen to ensure that a Post Office Local facility, which all ward councillors and Cllr Chapman gave unanimous agreement too, ought to be provided in lieu of the (unspecified?) 'banking facility' proposed in the West Bridgford Spiritual Church bid. Meaningful discussions have already taken place with the Wilford Bid to incorporate such PO facility, which was the number one priority requested by residents in the survey mentioned.

Finally it was stated that all three ward councillors should jointly scrutinise the proposals offered and report back should they not be satisfied that the provision of community facilities is being adequately served. My question would be - what sanction will councillors have this respect?

We await the terms and conditions of this lease with interest,

Regards,

Roger Steel (Cllr)

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