

# Notes of the 'Special' QMC Forum Public Meeting On Tuesday, 18 November 2003 at the Western Club, Derby Road

## Present:

### Queen's Medical Centre:

Robert Cartwright (Director of Estates & Assets)  
Mike Dinsmore (Operations Director)  
Sara Mellows (Manager, Planning & Performance)

### University of Nottingham:

Meryl Conisby (Students' Union Welfare Officer)  
Phillips Dalling (Head of Public Affairs)  
Jenny Denton (Project Co-ordinator – Active Communities)  
Chris Jagger (Director of Estates)  
Keith Jones (Registrar)  
Simon Mulloy (Director of Catering & Residential Services)

### Nottinghamshire Constabulary:

Ch.Insp. Sean Beebe (Central LAC Commander)  
Sgt. Ian Cresswell (Central LAC)  
PC Paul Moore (Central LAC)  
PC Paul Tordoff (Central LAC)  
Steve Walsh (Canning Circus & Central LAC Crime Reduction Manager)

### City Councillors:

Mohammad Aslam (Radford & Park Ward)  
Katrina Bull (Radford & Park Ward)  
Afzal Khan (Radford & Park Ward)  
Tony Marshall (Arboretum Ward)  
Zahoor Mir (Dunkirk & Lenton Ward)  
Bill Smith (Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey Ward)  
David Trimble (Dunkirk & Lenton Ward)

### City Council Officers:

Paul Boulton (Neighbourhood Services, Traffic Management Team)  
Steve Dowling (City Development, Assistant Director Environmental & Public Protection)  
Chris Hardwick (City Development, Public Health Team)  
Barry Horne (Corporate Director City Development)  
Dan Lucas (Housing Department)  
Jane Ludlow (Area 8 Manager, Neighbourhood Services)  
Shane Neville (City Development, Planning Applications & Advice)  
Madge Saunders (Area Co-ordinator)  
Greg Foister (Area Co-ordinator)

### Bus Company Representatives:

Andrew Normal (Trent/Barton)

### Chair of Meeting:

Ted Cantle (QMC Trust Board Chairman)  
Maja Fletcher (Resident)

**Apologies:** Apologies received from Professor S. Clough, Mrs. Rachel Crookston, Mr. Russ Davidson, Mr. D. Gibson, Mrs. R. Jones, Mr. John MacDonald, Ms. Rasool Norat, Mr. L.A. Smith and Professor D. Tallack.

**1. Introduction:** Ted Cantle welcomed everyone to the meeting. Maja Fletcher similarly thanked everyone for attending. She explained that this was a 'special' meeting in that the main focus was student-related issues and that QMC issues and local problems would be deferred until the next meeting. She asked attendees if they would fill in the Nottingham Action Group questionnaire which had been circulated.

**Announcements:** Two local families (Mr and Mrs Mark Berry and Mr and Mrs David Stott) were congratulated on the birth of their sons, both in August. Sincere thanks were expressed to Mrs Rachel Jones who has been actively cleaning up litter that has been accumulating at the bus stop outside Lenton Lodge, and to Brian Beadling who has been continuing his campaign to prevent the appearance of the area from degenerating any further by removing fly posters and other rubbish.

**The Next QMC Forum Meeting:** This will be in February 2004. It will revert to the usual format and notices will be going out early in the New Year. Daphnie Eaton at the QMC (Tel: 924-9924 Ext. 44992) with any items that need to go on the agenda for that meeting.

It was made clear that the purpose of this meeting was to provide a platform for exchange of information and it was not seen as an opportunity to 'bash' representatives from the University, Students' Union, the QMC, Nottingham City Council and the Police. A spokesman for the East Midlands Property Owners requested that good landlords should not be 'bashed' either.

**2. QMC:** The present year has been a good one for the QMC which had seen a series of performance improvements, as outlined in the Annual Report, copies of which were available at the meeting. The hospital has 600 volunteers and is looking to recruit more. Car parking is an on-going problem. However, an extra 250 spaces have been created at the Queen's Drive Park & Ride site. Public transport links are set to improve, particularly with the proposed introduction of the tram and the NET Line 3. There are plans to improve the Derby Road entrance in the not too distant future. Refurbishment of A&E has been completed and the Centre is now the largest in the whole of Europe. Outline planning permission has been given for a new Diagnostics & Treatment Centre on the QMC site. Environmental improvements have also been made. The Trust has received a national award for waste segregation and is working with the Carbon Trust to convert carbon-based forms of energy into non-carbon forms.

**3. Policing:** Ch.Insp. Sean Beebe is now in charge of the City Centre Local Area Command (which incorporates the old Central and Canning LACs) and local based officers are now operating from Canning Circus Station. Since the 15 September, officers responding to emergency calls have been based locally, rather than at Radford Road. Priority issues are anti-social behaviour, drug crimes and public reassurance. Ch.Insp. Beebe stated that his officers are very committed to their roles! A brief question and answer session followed:

■ Which parts of Dunkirk are covered by the City Centre LAC and which by the Meadows? The Meadows LAC covers the area south of University Boulevard.

■ Will Canning Circus Police Station be manned 24 hours a day? Between Canning Circus Station and Central Station, the LAC will be manned continuously. Wollaton Police Station is being refurbished and will not close.

■ Are there any plans to formally notify Neighbourhood Watches of the changes? A Neighbourhood Watch Administrator, based at Broxtowe Police Station has recently been appointed and will contact local groups in the near future.

■ Residents of Harlaxton Drive have been impressed with the changes in policing and an increased presence on the streets. However, what percentage of the workload is student-related? Students are far more likely to be victims of certain crimes than other groups and are often specifically targeted. Many of them do not heed advice given to them about personal and home security. Since the end of September there has been an operation in place to make the streets safer for students at night, and to reduce burglary.

**4. University:** A brief outline of the background to the meeting – '*Studentification*': *Issues Relating to the Expansion of Higher and Further Education* – was given.

■ In 1991 there were approximately 10,000 students. In 2001 there were around 32,000, 12% of the total population of Nottingham at that time.

■ This increase of both the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University students has happened without a proportionate increase in purpose-built accommodation and has fuelled the demand for privately-owned, rented accommodation, specifically in HMOs (houses in multiple occupancy).

■ The result, as demonstrated by the 2001 Census, is that, for example, more than 50% of Dunkirk and Lenton Ward's population was students. In some streets student occupancy was nearly 100%. Dunkirk and Lenton Ward is not unique in this. Similar situations exist in other City Wards popular with students, and in other university towns and cities across the country.

■ The effects on permanent residents and their neighbourhoods are well known and well documented and have come to be known as 'studentification'.

■ The question posed was: What will the situation be at the next Census in 2011?

Representatives from the University variously spoke about a range of topics.

- The positive contributions made to the City by the University and its students – students bring some economic benefit to the area, the University itself generates money for the City and the region as a whole, is a major employer and creates more employment opportunities as it expands.
- The University has been responding to the Government's policy of expansion of higher education, the aim of which is to have 50% of the relevant age group in higher education. Whether this is realistic or not is up for debate. However, the Government, while providing extra money to the University to teach students, has not provided for other forms of support such as accommodation. Thus finance for extra purpose-built accommodation has had to come either from the University itself or from the private sector or a mixture of the two.
- Over the last couple of years the University (with the help of private finance) has made significant progress in the provision of purpose-built accommodation and is looking to identify more sites for further schemes. Currently, there are 7,000 places available, around 40% of the full-time student population.
- The University does not stand aloof from the community and connections with the community are important and there is a desire to get these right. The University wants to be seen as a 'good neighbour'.
- Work is going on as a result of the area 4 Student Survey which reported in February this year. Eight working groups have been formed involving the two universities, Nottingham City Council and the Police. The aim is to jointly improve the quality of life in the area. Initiatives include: an information director, a pub watch initiative, a community action group involving staff and students, a landlord charter, university community liaison officer to support and guide students regarding good behaviour in the neighbourhood, a leaflet on how to live in the community which has been distributed to students and local residents.
- The Students' Union is working with the University to educate students about living in the community through leaflet drops and campaigns.
- The majority of students are well-behaved and they are sometimes disproportionately victims of crime within the city. However, some students do misbehave. At 18 students are legally independent adults and there are constraints as to what the University can and cannot do.

A wide-ranging question and answer session followed.

- Nottingham City Council is spending an extra £1.1 million per year on street wardens. Police Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens are already working in certain areas. Does the University have any plans to get wardens to patrol off-campus? Discussions are taking place regarding the possibility of employing a community liaison officer.
- The universities have the ultimate sanction for students who do not behave – they can throw them off their courses.
- Who is responsible for providing accommodation for students? There is no statutory responsibility for the University to do so, although universities have traditionally sought to provide it, e.g. Halls of Residence. The University of Nottingham provides a higher proportion than many other universities, but this does not mean that it is seeking to disavow its responsibility.
- If student numbers continue to expand, some-one should be responsible for their accommodation. Unless the University grips the problem, we will be dealing with this issue for the next 100 years. It will not be solved until some-one takes responsibility for it.
- A resident with six students living on one side and 15 on the other said that students do not know how to dispose of household waste and landlords do not take responsibility for it either. A Public Health Order has been issued by the Council in connection with the rubbish generated by one of the properties. None of the leaflets mentioned have been received either by the students or local residents. These should have been delivered and the University needs to know if they have not been.
- When are the University going to develop more accommodation on campus? There should be more space made available for student accommodation on the campus ... a comment which was well received by the audience. Eight hundred additional bed spaces are being developed.
- The University has a responsibility to get students to take responsibility for themselves and their community.
- A resident of the Wollaton Park Estate commented on the fact that he and his wife had bought their bungalow in anticipation of a pleasant and quiet retirement, as had many others. Now, as the houses come up for sale, they are being bought by landlords who are converting them into student accommodation resulting in disruption to other residents. These homes are being turned into 'pig sties' and the area is no longer quiet and respectable. The benefit to the local economy of the University was seriously questioned. These sentiments were fully endorsed by other residents.

■ Lenton has one of the highest crime rates in the country. How is the University hoping to get the message across to students about closing windows, etc.? Leaflets should have been delivered – more will be.

**5. Nottingham City Council:** The Director of Development and Environment explained that the City Council recognises the value of the two universities to the City and understands the need for them to be successful. However, that proposition cannot be made at any cost and the City Council has made a commitment to address some of the disbenefits. What is important is how we collaborate and co-operate in doing this.

■ The Area 4 Survey maps out everything that has been mentioned during the meeting. Everyone who has any powers and responsibilities must respond to that.

■ There are significant constraints on Environmental Health and Planning officers. For example, Planning officers are not able to intervene in many cases. The boundaries of how planning applications are approached are being pushed. An example is a local hotel where planning permission was given conditional on the property being used for family accommodation. It is clearly being used for student tenants. Planning officers are seeking to enforce regulations and they will push planning powers where they can.

■ In the short-term, Nottingham City Council is looking into the environmental impact of student accommodation and there will be a significant increase in street cleaning resources across the City. The Neighbourhood Warden scheme is being used to look at the anti-social behaviour element. A significant number of wardens will be deployed and their shifts are being looked at: there is evidence that this issue is prevalent late at night when students are coming home from pubs and nightclubs.

■ It is recognised that in some parts of the City there is demographic imbalance which is threatening the sustainability of communities. There are issues about shops converting to uses which suit students, leading to a reduced level of amenity for other residents, especially during university vacations. There are also issues about the viability of public services such as schools. It is necessary to look at the projected growth of student numbers and student accommodation and address these issues.

■ One of the Council's key commitments is to work with the universities to look at the growth of purpose-built accommodation so that it matches the growth of the student population. Another aspect of this is whether there is any way in which there can be a managed dispersal of students within residential areas. This is a long-term objective and will be more achievable as the public transport system improves.

■ The City Council is also working with various groups (including residents' groups), looking at the regulatory framework and how private rented sector buildings can be controlled. The current Housing Bill does not give sufficient controls.

Many points were made in the discussion which now continued.

■ Two-bedroomed houses are being turned into five-bedroom student accommodation. Who gives planning permission for this?

■ There are many hot food takeaways and other convenience food outlets which add to the litter problem. Waste management often will not remove extra rubbish from these houses.

■ When will Nottingham City Council, or the Government, consider charging landlords/students/the universities for these extra resources? It should not be down to residents to stand the extra charge.

■ Student Community Action were thanked for their work at Edna G. Olds school. However, the number of pupils at the school is dropping (from 249 to 153) as the community it serves is being strangled. Families with children are moving away: they do not want to live in a community dominated by students because of the disruption caused by students, particularly during the early hours of the day. So, whilst the work of Student Community Action was to be applauded, unless action is taken soon, there will be no community for them to help ... again a sentiment strongly supported by the audience.

■ What are the criteria for the number of bins? They are continually being left out on pavements. Nottingham City Council is investigating this.

■ The connection between students (as victims of crime) and criminal activity, especially burglary, has already been commented on. Nottingham has one of the highest crime rates in the country. There is a need to manage the problem for all the people of Nottingham, not just students.

■ Students are legally adult and this means there are limits on what can be done. However, the University is open to ideas about how they can be taught about their responsibilities and behaviour when they live in the community. Perhaps the Students' Union has some ideas.

- The University has a list of accredited accommodation. However, students will take whatever accommodation is offered to them, if it is attractive to them. The University's actions are limited because it does not control the property market.
- Students and residents are both victims!
- Council Tax rates are continually going up for permanent residents, but student properties are exempt.
- People in the community are victims of anti-social behaviour caused by students. Some are petrified to go out at night. For others, life only exists during university vacations.
- There is an increasing problem at the Lenton Recreation Ground where some students are climbing over the fences into the park at night and are subjecting patrols, etc. to verbal abuse when challenged.
- Do students get ejected if they are convicted of a criminal offence? There have been instances when the University has intervened and taken action. However, when it does or does not depends on the particular circumstances.
- If problems occur, residents need to write to Philip Dalling.
- Could the University encourage students to sign contracts which, if broken, would prevent them from graduating? This idea is something the University may wish to look into further.
- Cambridge University stops a student from graduating if money is owed to the university.
- Can we not stop students from bringing cars to Nottingham?
- Information provided to the meeting about students numbers, etc. was challenged by the University. The planned intake over the next two years is less than 2,000 and the University expects to have 2,000 more rooms available. There are no plans to increase postgraduate accommodation.
- Soon there will be no communities or neighbourhoods left in Dunkirk, Lenton, Wollaton, etc. The University may as well tell us all to leave now rather than wait for another two to five years when we will all have been forced to go anyway.
- Students do not make good neighbours. Why should they conform to our patterns of behaviour? They need to be housed on the campus.
- The construction of high-rise student accommodation on the University campus would spoil the ambiance of the campus. Neighbours have no ambiance now!
- Car parking on many streets is a problem, even to the extent that emergency services would find it impossible to get through. Parking permits for students and permanent residents is an issue that needs to be resolved.
- Would the University consider shifting the emphasis to distance learning?
- Only Cambridge, Oxford and Durham (the 'traditional' university towns) have a higher proportion of students per capita than Nottingham. The two local universities attract students here. They should take responsibility for what is happening.
- In Nottingham we have a crisis and it is going to become worse. The first step for the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University should be to decrease the number of students coming to Nottingham to below the national average.
- We are losing schools, shops, and family homes and still the universities are planning on increasing student numbers!
- Management of student properties is a problem. Local residents do not know where absentee landlords live. Does Nottingham City Council have this? The Council does have details of landlords in this area.
- We need a register of landlords so that we know who to contact if, for example, burglar alarms go off.
- There is no point of contact for reporting noise pollution, etc.
- The University's representatives and the City Council were asked to look at the average age of the audience and observe the strength of feeling of the residents.
- Regarding parking and parking permits and extra wheelie bins: the present system allows two permits per household and one visitor permit. Irregularities need to be reported to the City Council. (Steve Dowling from Environmental services offered to take details after the meeting.) More bins can be obtained by landlords.
- With respect to alterations to and development of properties for student accommodation, planning consent is not always needed. There is a concern that when development takes place notification letters do not always get through to the permanent residents and this is a problem that needs to be addressed. (Shane Neville of the Planning section of the Council offered to discuss these matters with anyone who would like to speak to him after the meeting.)

**6. Closing Remarks:** Appreciation was expressed to both the University of Nottingham and Nottingham City Council for having come to the meeting. There is a tendency for this issued to affect

individuals and isolated groups of residents, the result being that there is a lack of cohesion and no united voice. Work is on-going with the Leeds HMO Lobby, which has been pivotal in guiding what is happening in a substantial number of university towns and cities across the country. The Nottingham Action Group on HMOs is being formed because residents need to work with each other. At the moment the only people not represented 'at the table' are the permanent residents of Nottingham. The formation of the Nottingham Action Group will allow them to have that representation. Attendees were asked to complete the questionnaires and return them to Mrs. Fletcher as soon as possible. A meeting will be called so that residents can move the issue forward. Ted Cantle closed the meeting, thanking everyone for coming.

**8. Date of the Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the QMC forum will be on Tuesday, 24 February at 7.15 at the Western Club.

**Notes:**

1. Residents send their good wishes to John MacDonald and hope that he will be back at the QMC soon.
2. The Registrar, Keith Jones, has accepted an invitation to visit parts of Wollaton Park, Dunkirk and Lenton, the date to be finalised shortly.
3. There will be a residents meeting of the Nottingham Action Group on HMOs on Saturday, 7 February 2004 at 11.00 a.m. at the Western Club.
4. The 'spring' meeting of the QMC Forum will be on Tuesday, 4 May 2004, 7.15 p.m. at the Western Club.

**5. Summary of Issues Raised at the Meeting**

**A. National Government:**

**(a) Housing Legislation:**

- Adequate powers for local authorities in respect of licensing and enforcement of HMO legislation.
- Adequate powers for local authorities in respect of proposed areas of selective licensing.

**(b) Planning Legislation:**

- Adequate powers for local authority planning officers to control concentrations and spread of HMOs.

**(c) Taxation Legislation:**

- The need to address the current situation of exemption of property rented by students from local property taxes.

**B. City Council:**

**(a) Strategic Issues** related to:

- The managed growth of the student population, its dispersal, and the promotion of purpose-built accommodation (student 'village' concept).
- 'Structural' issues about services/amenities in affected communities – provided by the local authority, e.g. schools, leisure facilities; and provided by private means, e.g. shops.
- Inappropriate use of/loss of housing stock.

**(b) A Costs and Benefits Debate:** A serious and open analysis of the economic benefits brought to the City by the higher and further education establishments and their students.

**(c) Council Tax:** There needs to be a firm and qualitative response to the issue of 'lost' Council Tax (i.e. exemption of student properties from Council Tax) and the way in which central Government 'reimburses' the Council via the block grant. Do the two sets of figures add up?

**(d) 'Localized' Planning Issues** including:

- Inappropriate conversions/alterations'
- Applications where false or incomplete information has been presented.
- How to ensure full and proper consultation with relevant neighbours.
- Possibility of producing a guide for residents to explain what does/does not require planning permission so that residents can understand why certain things happen and others do not.

**(e) Property Owners/Landlords:**

- Register for HMO and non-HMO rented property, freely available to residents.
- Use of the Council's own property databases to publicise good housekeeping and management practice, accreditation schemes, services available, etc.

(f) **Parking Issues:** These focus on the fact that students are increasingly bringing cars with them while they are living in Nottingham.

(i) **Parking Permits:**

- Appropriate use of visitor permits
- Appropriate type of visitors' permits
- Fraudulent duplication of permits

(ii) **Allocation of Parking Spaces:** A higher number of parking spaces are allocated to students in private rented accommodation than to students living in purpose-built accommodation.

(iii) **Parking 'Fallout':** Students want off-street parking which may have the effect of making suburban 'family' homes more desirable for students and, hence, for landlords.

(g) **Neighbourhood Environmental:**

(i) **Waste Disposal Issues:**

- Adequate supply of bins
- Adequate promotion and information about recycling
- How to dispose of different types of waste, collection times – getting the basics understood

(ii) **Street Cleansing:** Appropriate responses to dumped rubbish, fly posting, graffiti, litter

- Level and method of cleansing
- Prosecution of offenders

(h) **Anti-Social Behaviour:** The issue of low-level anti-social behaviour which is, nonetheless, persistent and corrosive, e.g. intermittent noise nuisance from parties, rowdy behaviour, fireworks, urination and vomiting on residents' properties, trespassing in City parks and other public areas outside opening hours – appropriate responses including warnings and prosecutions.

(i) **Communication Issues:** Clear channels for residents to report abuses of relevant regulations (planning, parking, litter, noise, etc.) – contact names and feedback mechanisms so reports can be investigated and responded to.

**C. University and Students' Union:**

1. **Strategic Issues** related to:

- The managed growth of the student population, its dispersal, and the promotion of purpose-built accommodation (student 'village' concept).
- Issues about where students come from, who attends the institutions, and the impact this could have – 'distance learning', more local Nottingham/shire students.

2. **Impact on the Host Communities:**

- Actively discouraging/preventing students from bringing cars to Nottingham, beginning with Sixth Form applicants.
- Educating students about waste disposal and waste management issues such as:
  - promotion and information about recycling
  - disposal of waste, e.g. use of wheelie bins, collection dates, times, not dropping litter, cans and bottles on streets or in residents' gardens
  - responsibility for cleaning up litter, rubbish, etc. within the curtilage of rented properties
- Making student aware of the impact of, albeit low level, anti-social behaviour such as noise nuisance from parties, loud and incessant music, rowdy/drunken behaviour, fireworks, cycling on pavements (see Section B(h)).
- Educating students on how to avoid being the victims of crime (burglary, street robbery, etc.). Not only does this impact very unfavourably on students, but also has detrimental effects on residents who can become targets by default, whose neighbourhoods are labelled as 'crime hotspots', and consequently who will also suffer increased insurance premiums.

3. **Disciplinary Issues:**

- The use of disciplinary sanctions for all students (whether living in University or privately-rented accommodation) to enforce the issues already listed such as anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance, rubbish dumping).
- A 'contract of behaviour' linked to the above as part of the conditions of entrance to the institution.

3. **Communication with Residents:** Clearly understood and publicised procedure and point of contact for residents to lodge complaints about student misbehaviour to the University, together with a feedback loop to clarify any investigations and actions undertaken, e.g. were the offenders students and was any action taken in response to the complaint?

**D. Landlords and Tenants:**

**1. Contact:**

- Ability of neighbours to know who owns/manages a property and how they can be contacted in case of problems
- Tenants also need to become known to neighbours.

**2. Environmental:**

- cleansing (e.g. dumped rubbish within curtilage)
- property maintenance (exterior and interior property condition)
- garden maintenance, where appropriate. Some properties have no gardens, but others, especially in certain parts of Lenton, Wollaton Park and Lenton Abbey, have quite extensive garden areas

**3. Crime:**

- Landlords must help tenants to avoid becoming victims of crime by providing suitable and sufficient security (locks, alarm systems, etc.) and ensuring that tenants use them
- Tenants need to be prepared to involve themselves in providing communal security via resident-based schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch