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Date: 8-7-2011

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD LOCALITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING TASK AND FINISH GROUP – TO FOLLOW SUPPLEMENT

Date: Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 July 2011
Time: 1.30 pm (11 July) and 9.30 am (12 July)
Venue: Council House (next to the Civic Centre)

Members:

Councillor James, Chair
Councillors McDonald, Stark, Thompson and Wildy.

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION
UNDER AGENDA ITEM NOS. 5 AND 6.

Barry Keel
Chief Executive

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

LOCALITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

5. INTRODUCTION (Pages 1 - 8)

The Assistant Director for Safer Communities will provide an introduction to the Localities and Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group.

6. WITNESSES (Pages 9 - 22)

Members will have the opportunity to question representatives of council service areas, community groups, partner agencies, councillors and members of the public in relation to their views on locality and neighbourhood working.

Please note that the following documents will also be available throughout the meeting as evidence/background information to support this Task and Finish Group –

- Print out of neighbourhood data base, summarises every meeting - priorities, responses, public attending
- Schedule of meetings since June 2010
- Current directory of locality teams and neighbourhood personnel
- Current locality/neighbourhood maps
- a file containing all the feedback questionnaires
- A1 sized proposed realigned neighbourhood map with ward/neighbourhood names for display
- Previous O&S and cabinet locality reports

LOCALITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING - TWELVE MONTHS ON



REPORT TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD TASK AND FINISH GROUP

11 & 12 JULY 2011

Pete Aley

Assistant Director for Safer Communities

OBJECTIVES



- Set by full Council Feb 2010 (following recommendation by O&S Management Board)
- Good community engagement at Neighbourhood level
- Improved joining up of key services at Locality level
- Strengthened role for Ward Councillors
- Improved availability and consistency of Neighbourhood data
- Review after 12 months

CURRENT SITUATION



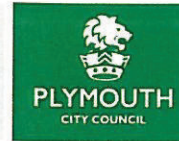
- Up and running since June 2010
- 6 multi-agency Locality Teams – ‘virtual teams’ (not public meetings)
- 43 Neighbourhood Liaison Officers appointed
- Approx. quarterly public meetings held in most of the 43 Neighbourhoods
- Joint working: Neighbourhood Liaison Officers, Councillors, Neighbourhood Police, Community Groups, etc
- Councillor Guidance issued July 2010
- ‘Your Neighbourhood’ web pages, including:
- Neighbourhood profiles & meeting records

PERFORMANCE SO FAR (1)



- Over 1,600 attendances from members of public at 143 Neighbourhood meetings (average 11 per meeting)
- 92% of public satisfied or very satisfied (125 returned questionnaires)
- 92% PCC staff satisfied or very satisfied (24 responses)
- 65% Police staff satisfied or very satisfied (58 responses)
- 70% Councillors satisfied or very satisfied with Neighbourhood meeting process, 50% with Locality Teams (17 responses)

PERFORMANCE SO FAR (2)



- 234 community priorities identified (ASB and highway issues dominate)
- 55% of priorities have been resolved or concluded, 44% have been followed up, 1% no action (excludes those only just identified)
- Other evaluation criteria largely met

SOME SUCCESS STORIES



- Neighbourhood meetings a focus for local concerns, e.g. Mainstone play park improvements, solution for Greenbank Ambulance site, bus service changes, more grit bins in Plymstock
- Cleaner back streets achieved in East End
- 'Pay Back' team to maintain landscaping in Morice Town and around Devonport Column
- Community involved in litter picks in West Park, Bladder Meadow & Astor Park
- Promoted Public Place Order to tackle anti-social behaviour in Mutley & Greenbank
- Locality Teams supporting 'Peer Assist' stop smoking campaign in schools

ISSUES



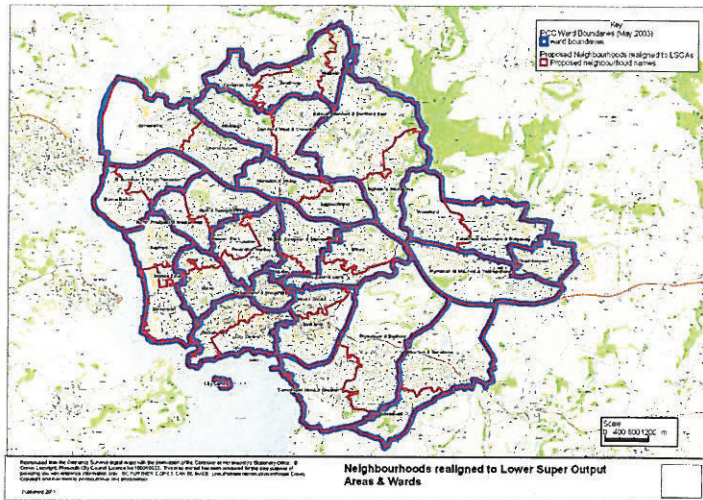
- Some inconsistency in staffing of Neighbourhoods
– e.g. Councillor support, issue resolution
- Neighbourhood boundaries cause problems for democratic accountability (wards) and data collection (super output areas)
- More informal meetings don't suit everyone
- Few formal referrals to Locality Teams - underused
- Need to extend engagement beyond meetings
- Take account of wider resourcing issues

POSSIBLE CHANGES (I)



- Reduce or discontinue current 6 Locality Teams
e.g. single 'trouble-shooting' team
- Realign Neighbourhood boundaries to fit within Wards and take account of 'Super Output Areas'

REALIGNED NEIGHBOURHOOD MAP

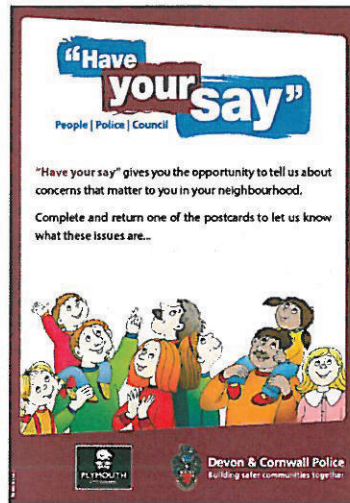


POSSIBLE CHANGES (2)



- Support Neighbourhood meeting arrangements with a 'house rule' protocol, where requested
- Council Senior Management Team to support; one 'champion' per Ward
- Confirm 'Lead Ward Councillors' idea rescinded
- Better use of updated Neighbourhood profiles
- Engage community more widely, for example through feedback from surveys and improved joint engagement material

INVOLVING MORE RESIDENTS

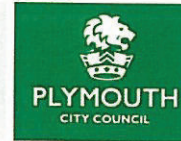


WHAT THE CHANGES WOULD MEAN (1)



- Neat fit of Wards/Neighbourhoods and Super Output Areas
- Resource savings as fewer Neighbourhoods and (possibly) Locality teams
- Better engagement between SMT and Ward Councillors
- Chance to refresh process - new staff involved

WHAT THE CHANGES WOULD MEAN (2)



- Reduced number of Neighbourhoods (43 to 39) whilst retaining local identity and convenience; most Wards to have just 2 Neighbourhoods
- Opportunity to take more flexible approach to number/nature of public meetings
- Reconsider the term 'locality working'? (but 'Locality working' in Children's Services unaffected)

CONCLUSION



- Neighbourhood meetings provide good basis for further improvements
- Locality Teams need rethinking
- Key changes needed include boundaries, support for Councillors and wider engagement

Localities and Neighbourhood Working**Task and Finish Group – Witness Schedule****11 and 12 July 2011****Monday 11 July 2011****1.30 pm start**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Witness</u>
2.30 pm	Cllr Jordan, Cabinet Member
2.50 pm	Mark Rich, Neighbourhood Liaison Officer (Mutley/Greenbank)
3.10 pm	Jo Atkey, Neighbourhood Liaison Officer (Southway)
3.30 pm	Comfort Break
3.40 pm	Ruth Walls, Third Sector Consortium
4.00 pm	Dave Brown, Devonport Neighbourhood Board Chair
4.20 pm	Nigel Pluckrose, NHS Plymouth

Tuesday 12 July 2011**9.30 am start**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Witness</u>
9.30 am	Gill Peel, Neighbourhood Liaison Officer (Morice Town)
9.50 am	John Emery, Plymstock Resident
10.10 am	Phil Mitchell, Locality Manager (North West)
10.30 am	Pat Patel, Tamarview Community Centre
10.50 am	Hannah Jordan, Neighbourhood Liaison Officer (Chaddlewood)
11.00 am	Adjournment for Members to attend Second Royal Tank Parade – reconvene at 1.30 pm
1.30 pm	Chief Superintendent Andy Bickley
1.50 pm	PCSO Sarah Wilkins (Derriford Neighbourhood Team)
2.10 pm	JP Sanders, Locality Manager (South East)
2.30 pm	Russ Moody, Stop Smoking Service Manager, and Dan Preece, Public Protection

Time

Witness

2.55 pm

Comfort Break

3.15 pm

Claire Oatway, Children's Services / Local Strategic Partnership
and Maggie Carter, Children's Services

3.40 pm

Peter Flukes, Wolseley Trust

4.00 pm

Sarah Hopkins, Neighbourhood Liaison Officer (Ford), and Paul
Squire, Ford Resident

Morice Town Neighbourhood Meeting Newsletter

Priority 1: Environmental Issues -(public realm, street cleansing, fly tipping and dog fouling)

You asked ? To help solve the Issue with Dog Fouling

We did: Raised the issue with Public Protection Service who will patrol the area when reports are made to them from residents, unfortunately the incident has to be witnessed by an Animal Health Welfare Officer who will then issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for £80. Police Community Support Officer's and Neighbourhood Wardens are also authorized to issue Fixed Penalty Notice's .

You asked? Possibility of a dog bin to be put up?

We did: Your local Councillor Nicky Wildy has accessed funding to enable the Salvation Army to purchase a dog bin and have it put up nearby. Major Andrew Richards from the Salvation Army Hall has kindly taken on the responsibility and maintenance of the dog bin.

Priority 2: Parking Issues

You asked? To ease the congestion of vehicles parked at the bottom of Clarence Place and stop vehicles driving the wrong way in one way streets.

We did : The Police Community Support Officer' s monitored the street for motorists and it seemed to have been a one off due to lane being blocked. We arranged for the yellow lines to be reinstated to ease the parking situation.

You asked? To help with inconsiderate parking in and around the homezone.

We did: Reinstated the yellow lines in Keat Street junction and with the assistance of the Police Community Support Officer's emailed registration numbers to the Dockyard / Naval Base advising them of staff parking inconsiderately which they are addressing internally. We have liaised with Transport and Highways and reinstated double yellow lines on Healy Place/ Charlotte Street and Keat Street.

Priority 3: Maintenance of Homezone

You asked? To improve and maintain the planters which were in need of attention and were looking neglected.

We did: With agreement from residents at the last meeting , Councillor Mark Coker accessed some funding and we now have assistance from the Probation Service to dig out old roots and prepare the planters for new plants and shrubs to be planted.

You asked ? Maintenance of roads and street furniture within the homezone.

We did: We invited officers from Plymouth Transport and Highways Partnership to attend a meeting.

Whilst out and about : It was noted that a granite seat was damaged and in a dangerous condition

We did: Logged the request with the Transport and Highways Partnership who came out and made safe.

You reported: Damaged granite bollard knocked over and waiting for replacement, which was causing a parking issue.

We did: With agreement from the resident concerned we arranged for a metal bollard to be erected to replace the granite bollard.

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Morice Town Neighbourhood; Progress report on Issues raised since September 2010. These include anything raised at a neighbourhood meeting, Operation Vocal or referred to the neighbourhood liaison officer for follow up				
Item	Matter Discussed	Action Required	Update	Status
1	Drinking on street	Police informed of problem areas. Police stated the number to use when reporting a non-emergency nuisance.	Regular patrols in the problem areas have been carried out, on one occasion alcohol was confiscated from a young girl. No further reports have been made to the police regarding drinking in the street. Regular patrols are continuing.	Resolved
2	Car Trading	Police to investigate and refer to PCC via Gill Peele if Trading Standards issue	Not aware that it is an ongoing problem in Morice Town. No further reports which indicates this.	Concluded
3	Parking a trailer in a bay	GP to investigate if this is legal Action Update: Have made further enquiries with Civil Enforcement (abandoned vehicles) await reply on vehicles with no engines and trailers blocking lanes and in parking bays.(Parking CEO'S)	The 1980 Highway Act states that it is illegal to allow a structure notwithstanding it is on wheels, to cause an obstruction on the Highway. This Act includes caravans, trailers, and boats on trailers. The Councils consolidated Traffic Regulation Order 2004 also states that caravans or trailers cannot be parked in resident's parking bays. An incidence of this nature should be reported to the Council on tel 668000. A Civil Enforcement Officer will be assigned to the area to find out who the trailer belongs to. PCC will then write to the trailer owner telling them to move within a certain number of days and if they don't they will be reported to a Highways Inspector who will put a legal 7 day notice on it and have it removed.	Being followed up
4	Utility company's obligations for reinstatement. Photos shared of granite back lanes being replaced with tarmac	GP to investigate with colleagues in PCC and to clarify if in listed area.	On the issue of reinstatements, the priority for the Council is to make the area safe by using the most appropriate material The permanent repair should be in the same material as the original, however there are exceptions: 1. where the material is no longer made. 2. Where the original material is no longer deemed a safe material to use, e.g. 900x600 pcc slabs. 3. Where the original material is no longer viable for maintenance and an alternative material used. In item 3 this could happen on changing say a flagged area to bituminous material, however this is not always possible for example in a conservation area. This policy applies to utility companies as well as Council repair work	Being followed up
5	Repair or upkeep of planters		Transport and Highways have assessed the planters and most are not falling foul of intervention levels ascertained for the upkeep of the public realm across the city. If they are deemed dangerous they would be removed but not replaced. Andrew Richards, Salvation Army has offered to maintain the two planters outside the Salvation Army Hall. The upkeep if the planters remain an issue as up to now, this has relied on the willingness of certain residents. Action; This issue will be escalated to the South West Locality Manager. Cllr Wildy suggested that local organisations could be asked for support. It was also suggested that the Probation Service be contacted to ask if this would be appropriate for the Community Payback scheme. We have managed to gain with some help from Cllr Coker's community fund an amount to pay the Probation Service a maintenance fee to maintain the planters within the Home Zone area – a map has been given to the Supervisor to ensure only those which have no one to maintain them are attended. This work should commence on Friday 25 March.	Concluded
6	Parking Issues Dockyard workers in Clarence Place, Charlotte Street and Warren street	Cllr Coker to canvas for residents views on parking and parking permits. GP to clarify where current parking permit restrictions are. Clarence Place was given as an example where there are Parking difficulties	Maps printed showing current parking restrictions that are in place. Cllr Coker carried out the survey; it was delivered to approx 500 addresses in the Morice Town area with a free post. Results from survey as follows: 29 returns said that they were unhappy with the parking 34 said that they were unhappy with general appearance of home zone 29 returns stated that they were unhappy with the maintenance of the home zone. 31 returns stated that they were unhappy about street cleaning 19 returns were concerned about safety in relation to parking and visibility. Clarence Place, Herbert Street and Charlotte Street were mentioned as the most problematic place for parking issues, around Balfour Terrace was also an issue Parking issues are being investigated by PCSO's – there are no parking restrictions in place and therefore PCC are unable to action. Dockyard parking was an issue for many residents and Parking Permits was also asked for by 6 residents along with more enforcement Further action; Cllr Coker to contact the Dockyard to discuss the problem and to request that measures be taken to try to prevent it. Cllr Coker received a response from dockyard await response from Royal Navy. Result of Action: letters were sent out to staff of Dockyard and Royal Navy requesting that they are sensitive to the community in where they park. Update action: PCSO'S will collect registrations and check if local to area , a letter will be sent to dockyard querying if they are contractors and if they could have temp parking permits within the dockyard. 08/04/2011 Update Action: there are still vehicles being inconsiderately parked, registrations and vehicles have been checked and NLO will send email to Dockyard and Navy. Looking into no parking signs being erected although not enforceable PCSO are able to put notices advising of problems due to parking in the area.	Being followed up

7	Healy Place Parking – Trade parking issues		Civil Enforcement Officers are also regularly patrolling area but due to the 5 minute rule before issuing a PCN – vehicles are then moved and unable to action. They are aware of problem and it does seem to come from the business on Alfred Street, which backs onto Healy Place. NLO and Officers from Parking will be meeting on Monday to evaluate how best to solve the problem. Update action: Amey have refreshed the double yellow lines on Charlotte Street , Keat Street and rear of shops on Albert road which leads onto Healy Place which will hopefully ease some of the parking problems	
8	Resident concern about tree	It was suggested that the tree outside the salvation army centre was overgrown. GP / Cllr M Coker to find out whether it is Highways or Parks responsibility and arrange an inspection.	Email Response from Assistant Director Street Services and Public protection Service .The tree officer has checked this tree and it is already on our waiting list to be pruned. It is not deemed as dangerous as of yet so it is down as a priority Action ; The resident has requested that this be followed up further due to cracks in the garden wall and will provide a copy of the structural report to Cllr Coker. Transport and Highways dept investigated made good a minor crack in pavement, however did not feel that this suggested that it was the tree causing the problem. Awaiting Structural report from resident to Cllr Coker. No report has been submitted and nothing raised by resident at the meeting.	Concluded
9	Need for street bins in Charlotte street and Haddington road	GP to discuss with Street Cleansing	A new bin has been installed in Charlotte St	Resolved
10	Dog fouling	No specific details of area given.	No further action until specific areas given. More information was provided to the Police at the January meeting. The Police advised residents to report incidents of dog fouling and where possible to take a photograph. Action; The PCSOs will follow up and take enforcement action where they can and NLO to discuss with PCC Dog Wardens Action Result: The Animal Health and Welfare Officers are allocated work by Locality. Pete Temlett, is the officer for the Morris Town area. If they receive complaints, officers can patrol the area. If the person responsible for the dog does not pick up after their dog and this is witnessed by an AHWO they will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice for £80 to be paid within 14 days (reduced to £60 if they pay within 7 days). If the FPN is not paid, a prosecution is prepared and they may have to attend court for the original offence of not picking up the faeces. PCSO's and Neighbourhood Wardens are also authorised to issue FPNs. The officers have to prioritise their work relating to complaints about fouling with the other issues for which they are also responsible, e.g. investigating other dog control issues, animal health and welfare issues, stray dogs, liaise with the Police regarding dangerous dogs, etc. etc. Therefore, it is difficult to be in the right place at the right time to catch people not picking up so the amount of information the public can give us relating to the times and places when fouling is being committed is important.	Concluded
11	Operation Vocal Pod placed in Charlotte Street on 23 November 2010	Issues of fly tipping 3 areas specific :	Junction Charlotte Street and Keat Street – Cleared R/o 5/7 Alcester Street Builders waste – passed to Civil Enforcement residents advised to remove o/s 76 Healy Place – dumpy bags removed by Amey Highways.	Resolved
12	Residents using Sure-start Keystone to pass on issues	Herbert street flats communal bin not being put back to bin area – green bin being contaminated as left at verge.	Updated a previous log on CRM spoke with supervisor who was dealing with the issue and liaising with the caretaker. Await response from PCH estate officer who was liasing with care taker. At January meeting, PCH confirm that this has now been actioned.	Resolved
13	Residents street trading / parking of vehicles	Bottom of Clarence place landlord now submitted planning application for garage.	PCSO have been requested to monitor the parking situation in the area and report back street trading so that we can speak with Trading Standards. Civil Enforcement Officers are also regularly patrolling area but due to the 5 minute rule before issuing a PCN – vehicles are then moved and unable to action. They are aware of problem and it does seem to come from the business on Alfred Street, which backs onto Healy Place. NLO and Officers from Parking will be meeting on Monday to evaluate how best to solve the problem. Update action: PCSO'S will collect registrations and check if local to area , a letter will be sent to dockyard querying if they are contractors and if they could have temp parking permits within the dockyard. 08/04/2011 Update action: Amey have refreshed the double yellow lines on Charlotte Street which will hopefully ease some of the parking problems.	Concluded
13	Parking issues	Bottom of Clarence Place	As above	Being followed up
14	Bottle Bank Request	Request by resident to have a bottle bank	DCHA will advise on whether agreed location near the Garden Street maisonettes is suitable – if ok need to contact Chelson Meadow –	Concluded

		installed in Marlborough Street	see email – site visit and check with police for location. Site deemed unsuitable broken bottles etc. The collection of glass as part of the normal collection of recyclables is in the planning stage at the moment. It is unlikely that we will introduce this service until 2013/14 at the earliest.	
15	Damaged fencing circling car park	Email received re : junction of Haddington Road/Balfour Terrace fencing been hit by cars now dangerous	NLO logged onto CRM for Transport and Highways Department target date 18 March 2011 E242802. NLO spoken with Amey representative, blacksmiths going out to site to bend the post back in as materials no longer found.	Resolved
16	Fly Tipping issue	White Goods dumped Rear of Benbow Street / Haddington Arms resident emailed Cex	PCC logged onto CRM for Street Services and supervisor for area confirmed it had been collected.	Concluded
17	Granite Seating	Damaged granite seating – dangerous to children	Logged onto CRM 24/02/2011 and emailed a chase to as nothing noted and still outstanding. 09/03/2011 lime coping replaced on wall and made secure	Concluded
18	Drain Cover grills	Report of ongoing problem of theft of grills	Emailed PCSO 08/03/11 about the report and asked to investigate whilst on their rounds. No evidence found.	Concluded
19	Repaint Double Yellow Lines	Cllr Coker reported faded double yellow lines adding to problem of parking in area	Logged onto CRM 238009, emailed a chase await response. Action Update: A response should be received by the end of w/c 22 March 2011 - yellow lines will be added into work plans for April Parking CEO will keep a check on the area. Action update : Charlotte Street repainted but not the broken lines in the lane that lead to Clarence Place, this was the area the residents were complaining about most. Have emailed watchman inbox and Duncan to see what can be done 03/05/2011	Concluded
20	Vehicles driving against the flow of one way system with speed	PCSO's asked to investigate the problem.	Action update: We have made some local enquires and have been informed of one day when it happened regularly but nothing recently. They will continue to monitor the situation	Concluded
21	Salvation Army and residents request for a dog bin	Cllr Wildy has offered money from Community Grant Scheme	Funds will be given direct to Salvation Army, who will be responsible for the bin. Update : funds received and purchase and put up of bin should be in place by 27/05/2011	resolved
22	Builders waste dumped rear of Alcester street	Cllr Wildy had received a complaint from resident re the dumping of waste	Call was logged with street services on the Friday and the waste removed on the Monday. Telephoned customer to carry out follow up call customer very happy with service and lane clear at present. Have requested a check from Enforcement PPS to keep a check on rear lane and builders dumping waste.	Resolved
23	Waste dumped	bottom end of rear lane – Clarence Place reported by NLO whilst in area	2 x gas bottles and 2 x smashed windows and panes of glass – logged onto CRM for street services Update action: items removed in scheduled cleanse	Resolved
24	Concrete Post Missing	Concrete post has been knocked down and removed	o/s no 6 there was a concrete post – cars are now able to pull into the area and use for parking in a non parking area. Originally logged on CRM E228592 4 JAN 2011 – standard scheme letter sent to customer ? Update action: left message and email for Victoria Hutchings (Plymouth watchman) to call back 08/04/2011 Update action: chased and received response 27/04/2011 – unable to replace granite post with like for like as recycled material used option given to resident to replace within 2 weeks with metal bollard or wait indefinitely for a granite post. NLO contacted Mr Storar 27/04/11 who requested a metal bollard to be erected instead. CLOSED ON CRM – have requested PCSO to confirm action completed	Being followed up
25	Split bags and tree trunk	Rubbish dumped again in the area	Logged onto CRM to be removed on next cleanse? Update action: items removed under scheduled cleanse	Concluded
26	Request for top soil for planters	Elderly Residents living in Keat St would like to have some top soil so that they can maintain the planter near them	Contact to Parks revealed that a one off payment to parks was made by T&H – NLO to take control of the budget in order to assist Probation Service in their agreement to maintain the planters and distribute. Lady has called again as eager to plant some flowers before too late. Have requested contact by Probation Services to the resident – probation services will be co-ordinating deliveries of top soil for planters throughout Home Zone.	
27	Junction St Levan Road faded lines	Residents not happy that the dockyard workers using car park come out at the junction in 2 lanes of traffic	PCSO emailed NLO reference residents unhappy about the situation, felt that if the faded lines could be repainted this would solve the situation. Logged onto CRM 258639 TARGET DATE 1 JUNE 2011	Being followed up
28	Items dumped	outside garage rear of 31 St Vincent Street	Resident reported as the Operation Vocal items appear on regular basis outside this garage – the rear lane access is the only access for this resident as unable to use front access due to stairs. UPDATE ; items removed on scheduled cleanse PCSO called around and nothing found	Concluded
29	CASE LOAD FROM CLLR LITTER	Litter charlotte street near shop	Complaints to cllr Nicky Wildy raised at pre meet – emailed to street services Neil Worth / Steve Prout check if on CRM and await update – plus copy of schedule of cleanse	Being followed up

30	Planning Application	Follow update on planning application for garage rear of - Healy place	Planning application I I/00210/ful – this has been declined as was second application I I/00690/ful – Planning looking at going in with Enforcement re premise use.	Concluded
31	Devonport Friends	Follow up on events in Devonport park	Emailed Chris Coldwell / Ben Ozanne await update	
32	CASE LOAD – cllr wildy	Sensitive issue with elderly resident and dog causing a nuisance	Emailed to PCSO Anna – with info on Cinnamon Trust asked for check in the street to include a call upon the resident to carry out investigation – UPDATE PCSO familiar with Lady and often drop in and help out in situations will update later.	Being followed up
33	State of vehicles in Healy Place – not road worthy	This is linked to planning application / garage	Nfa await enforcement action information from planning.	
34	Stripping of Washing Machines on highway		Need to log onto crm for amey hways issue	
35	Drains	Top of ryder road/pellew place bottom of Alcester road/ top of Dixon Place	Logged onto flare hys - 802294	
36	Grit Bins	Request for information on the winter maintenance programme for Haddington and Alcester Street		

Saturday, September 11, 2010, 07:00

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Fine words, but less democracy

PEOPLE attending the new-style Neighbourhood/PACT meeting in Hooe Baptist Church on September 6 were perplexed to find there was no chairperson, note-taker (minutes secretary) or agenda.

The meeting convener explained these were not allowed under the newly-introduced 'locality working' system. The meeting was further surprised to hear that no one had been told how the new system would work.

The council, in early February, agreed to introduce 'locality working', replacing area committees with six 'localities' broken down into 43 neighbourhoods. Meetings would be based on the existing police Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings starting on June 1. It's a shame the council failed to publish information about the scheme, or let people know how it would work. My search of the council's website could find no reference to locality working.

The Government in 2006 published a White Paper on 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' outlining the policy to give people more control over their lives; be consulted and involved in running services; informed about the quality of services in their area; and to call local agencies to account if services fail to meet their needs. Council officers in the report to Cabinet and council early this year did not consider this guidance important. Team Leaders and Service Co-ordination Teams, appointed to run the scheme, can only be approached by designated ward councillors. Lead ward councillors are apparently unaware that they are key facilitators in negotiations of electors' problems with service co-ordination teams and the locality lead, or that they have the power to demand answers through the new Community Call for Action legislation.

The decommissioning of area committees in April disenfranchised local people of the right to question councillors in open forum on matters of concern and the right to receive answers. This action by the council has removed the right for local people to be consulted on many of the issues that affect the community.

Plymouth's vision to become 'one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone' is meaningless if it denies its citizens the right to be involved in the decision-making process on how it is governed.

[JOHN EMERY](#)

Plymstock

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Locality and Neighbourhood Working - Your View

1. In terms of getting issues raised and responded to, do you think the Neighbourhood Meeting process is delivering:

- A - An excellent service
- B - A good service
- C - A satisfactory service
- D - A poor service
- E - Don't know

2. Please tell us what was helpful and what could have been more helpful:

The answer to this question is in two parts;

- The service provided by the police is very good.
- The service provided by Plymouth City Council is extremely poor.

Plymouth City Council involvement at neighbourhood meetings is unfocused, lacking in direction and failing to provide answers to community issues raised by local people. Ward councillors cannot carry out their role as advocates as they are unable to obtain answers to resident's questions from the Service Co-ordination Team. Councillors holding executive cabinet office have a primary duty to represent ward residents at neighbourhood meetings and advice surgeries not the Council.

Locality Working is failing to address the three Corporate Improvement Priorities ('CIPs') to better engage communities at Neighbourhood level, putting councillors at the forefront of this process, and set up new cross-service dedicated teams at Locality level.

New legislation to be introduced by the coalition government under The Localism Bill will radically transform the relationship between central government, local government and to devolve power to local communities and individuals.

It was agreed to keep Locality Working under constant review and to request a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group be established 12 months after implementation to formally review progress.

Reason: To report on performance against original aims and to review the effectiveness of working arrangements and Neighbourhood engagement.

The Locality and Neighbourhood Working Consultation – Your View did not appear on the Council's main consultation webpage. Why not?

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Locality Working Progress - Neighbourhood working task and finish group
Debbie Burton - Neighbourhood Manager

Views on how locality working has developed – taking into account the recommendations put forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – June 2011.

This feedback has been gathered from Neighbourhood Regeneration Team (NRT) – who currently undertakes the role of NLO in 8 Neighbourhoods, alongside our Neighbourhood working role in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city.

Role of NLO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to be realistic in terms of what NLO's can achieve – on top of day job – and to make sure expectations are managed so that NLO's remain committed/enthusiastic • NLO's need to feel confident in their role and feel that Councillors/partners are willing to work in partnership to solve neighbourhood issues through locality working mechanisms • NLO's should be able to access front line workers more to support community engagement and target the under represented– e.g. youth workers, PSA's • NLO's need to be provided with an incentive to take on the additional role – free training? • NLO's need more back up support – provision of resources for meetings/coordination of information and publicity • NLO's can provide a proactive resource at meetings – educate the public on how to access services/where to go to get issues resolved – if support was provided centrally – e.g. information and literature on Council services • Suggestion that NLO's do not have to be sought from Grade H and above, that experienced Grade E officers for example could be utilised from within the Council • Would have helped to have had a stronger corporate message initially to stop inconsistency in terms of new roles/management of change
Locality teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the recommendation that there could be 1 city wide Locality team – as long as they are the right people • Some confusion about the role of locality teams • Some locality teams have been reluctant to respond to issues raised

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SE locality team however have been very responsive and proactive
Community engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support recommendation to re-brand – felt that there was no publicity launch so message was put out there haphazardly • Central coordination of publicity would help – e.g. one person contacting press to inform them of meetings – will free up NLO time • Less emphasis on numbers at meetings to measure success – this only allows for number of those confident/able to attend meetings to be accounted for – valuable issues can be fed into the process in other ways • NLO's should be given flexibility so that other methods of community engagement can be achieved – e.g. holding playground surgeries/on street meetings instead of attending 4 formal meetings a year • There are differences how each neighbourhood wants to publicise meetings – there should be a minimum standard set
Proposed locality boundary changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback already given to Nick McMahon regarding impact of changes on Devonport, Efford and North Prospect • The proposed splitting of North Prospect would be problematic – option 2 is the preferred option as it keeps North Prospect estate together • Community identity is important when looking at neighbourhood boundaries
Neighbourhood issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although some issues remain on-going in neighbourhoods, NLO's can improve understanding among residents in terms of why issues cannot be resolved – the barriers that the Council/Partners have to overcome • Services have responded well to neighbourhood issues – providing information to NLO's regarding current priorities – e.g. parking/highways • Councillors are effective at chairing meetings and steering the public away from focusing on un-resolvable issues