

Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Reviews)

Wednesday 28 October 2009

PRESENT:

Councillor Coker, in the Chair.
Councillors Ball and Martin Leaves.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Reynolds

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.00 am.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the code of conduct.

6. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

7. REVIEW OF PLYMOUTH SKATEBOARDING BY-LAW

The Panel was provided with information on the current skateboarding by-law and its scope, however it was highlighted that the aim of the Task and Finish Group was to focus upon skateboarding in the city centre. The by-law includes Broadway and Ridgeway which the Group will have to take into account but are not the focus of the group.

The Panel was informed that –

- (i) there was not a complete ban on skateboarding under the existing skateboarding by-law;
- (ii) an individual, under the current skateboarding by-law, had to be deemed to be causing a nuisance or be a threat to health and safety in order for any further action to be taken;
- (iii) there was an issue with the clarity of the by-law which made policing and enforcement difficult.;

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (iv) the wording of the current by-law was open to interpretation as it stated that 'no person shall in any of the designated areas skate, slide or ride on rollers, skateboards, wheels, mechanical contrivances or other equipment in such a manner as to cause danger or nuisance...'; it was highlighted that the word nuisance was very ambiguous;
- (v) the possibility that adequately detailed signage could be erected in the city centre informing individuals of the by-law was discussed, further research is required to determine if this is practical or desirable;
- (vi) the skateboarding by-law was produced by Plymouth City Council, however it was currently the responsibility of Devon and Cornwall Police to enforce;

- (vii) discussions had taken place between a Plymouth City Council Lawyer and a representative from Devon and Cornwall Police with regards to the enforcement of the Skateboarding by-law; it was suggested that PCSOs be engaged with the policing and enforcement of the by-law however it may then be the responsibility of the Council to provide resources for prosecution;
- (viii) the confiscation of skateboards, directed to those individuals who caused a nuisance, was a possibility that would be discussed at the next meeting;
- (ix) the current scope of the skateboarding by-law covers the city centre, the Ridgeway and the Broadway;
- (x) a blanket prohibition of skateboarding in the area might cause the problem to move to another part of the city;
- (xi) the existing skate park at Central Park was to close due to the commencement of the Life Centre Project however there were plans for a replacement skate park to be built; consultation on a proposed site which would be situated in the vicinity of the current skate park was due to start on 11 November 2009. The press release due to be issued this week would be circulated to Panel Members as soon as possible;
- (xii) the main amendment to the proposed skateboarding by-law was contained in paragraph two in which it was stated that 'no person shall skate, slide or ride on rollers, skateboards or other self propelled vehicles in the designated areas (except where authorised to do so by the owner of the land)'; it was thought that wheelchair users would not be affected by this, however this would be investigated. It was made clear that this group was only dealing with skateboarding, issues such as cycling in the City Centre are not part of this remit;
- (xiii) the request for a Public Consultation in the form of a questionnaire providing the views of individuals upon skateboarding in the city centre would be submitted to the 3 December meeting;
- (xiv) there was varied ownership and responsibility of land outside the Council House and Civic Centre, some of it was maintained by Highways and some by Parks;
- (xv) skateboarding has and still does cause damage to street furniture, the cost of repair is not believed to be high and this issue will be examined in more detail at the next meeting

Resolved that –

- (1) feedback from the questionnaire be submitted to the 3 December meeting;
- (2) the two members of the Youth Parliaments be invited to attend the next meeting but also asked to conduct a young persons poll on views around skateboarding in the city centre;
- (3) the rules regarding the co-opting of new Members on to the Task and Finish Group be checked;
- (4) the following people be invited to attend the next meeting:
 - Councillors Stephens, King and McDonald
 - Councillor Stevens
 - Nick Marker – Prime Delux

- a representative from the Youth Parliament
- John Drury - Anti-Social Behaviour Manager
- Inspector Willingham
- PCSO for the city centre area
- the owner of Café Roma
- Mike Kendall - Highways Management Co-ordinator
- Catherine Dilloway – Milehouse Skate Park
- Skateboarders

(5) CCTV images of incidents caused by skateboarding be sought from the Police.

8. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.