

Plymstock Area Committee

Monday 21 September, 2009

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs. Pengelly, in the Chair.
Councillor Michael Leaves, Vice-Chair.
Councillors Mrs. Foster and Wigans.

Co-opted Representatives: Dr. B. Cooper and Mr. S. Johnson.

Apologies for absence: Councillors K. Foster and Viney.

The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 7.00 p.m.

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.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

15. MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June, 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

16. Refurbishment of Play Parks

The Chair reported that £60,000 of Green Space Funding had been allocated to refurbish play parks at King George V Playing fields and Blackstone Close. Consultation events were being held at the parks between 3.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday 23 and 30 September, 2009, respectively.

17. Changes to Bus Services

The Chair reported that, with effect from 25 October, 2009, Citybus would be introducing a new service 5/5A operating in both directions via Billacombe, Plymstock, Elburton, Staddiscombe, Goosewell and Oreston. The two circular services would run every 20 minutes in each direction on Mondays to Saturdays, hourly in the evenings and on bank holidays, with no evening service on Bank Holidays. This route was identical to that of the former 5 and 6 service operated by First, prior to the introduction of Ugobus in April, 2008.

18. Housing Community Environment Fund

The Committee was reminded that the Housing Community Environment Fund of £2,532 had to be allocated before 19 October, 2009, and that, to date no firm proposals for expenditure had been agreed.

Resolved that expenditure of the Housing Community Environment Fund be delegated to the Contract and Disrepair Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

(In accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Chair brought forward the above items of business because of the need to inform Members).

19. LOCALITY WORKING

The Director of Community Services submitted a report on Locality Working. The report –

- (i) advised that the City had been divided into 6 Localities in order to help deliver better services by –
 - enabling residents to influence and challenge service delivery
 - making services more joined up
 - improving councillor involvement
 - reducing inequalities between communities
 - focussing money and staff more effectively
 - improving the sharing and use of information
 - monitoring service provision more effectively
 - meeting local and national targets

- (ii) indicated that, initially, each Locality would have a Local Service Co-ordination Team, led by a Locality Champion, with key people from –
 - street scene and environmental services
 - services relating to community safety
 - health services
 - services for children and young people

- (iii) sought views and ideas on –
 - the best way of joining up services in Localities
 - whether area committees should be replaced with new Locality Partnerships
 - ways to improve links between organisations providing services and the community in each Locality
 - the sorts of information Locality Teams will need to help with their work

In response to questions raised, the Committee heard further that –

- (iv) it was envisaged that Locality Working would be resourced from within existing services and, therefore, the creation of new posts would not be required;
- (v) the role of councilors in this regard was not expected to change, however, they would have more direct contact with partner agency representatives through their attendance at the Locality meetings;
- (vi) the Locality meetings would be held in public as part of the community engagement/involvement process but as each area would have different priorities, the content and format of the meetings had yet to be determined;
- (vii) there were no plans to relocate provision of healthcare services out of the area, this would be contrary to the principles of locality working.

Concerns highlighted for feedback as part of the consultation were as follows –

- loss of democracy and accountability of partner organisations acting as non-elected representatives of the community
- whether there would still be opportunity for question time for electors
- where the teams would be located and how they could be contacted
- the length of time it had taken to bring the consultation to area committees, considering it had commenced in July

20. **SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR MARKINGS (VARIOUS), TRANSFER OF ENFORCEMENT FROM POLICE TO COUNCIL'S CIVIL ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS PHASE 2 - OBJECTIONS**

The Assistant Director of Plymouth Transport and Highways submitted a report –

- (i) setting out proposals to transfer responsibility of enforcement for School Keep Clear

Markings at Plymstock School from the Police to the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers;

- (ii) advising that the proposal had been advertised and no objections had been received.

Resolved that the Cabinet Member for Transport be recommended to implement the proposals as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

21. MOUNT BATTEN TOWER

The Director for Corporate Support submitted a report updating the Committee on the current condition of Mount Batten Tower and the works being undertaken to ensure its immediate preservation. In attendance to present the report and respond to questions was the Council's Head of Corporate Property.

The Committee was advised that -

- (i) a condition and structural survey had been undertaken, both of which had revealed areas for concern relating to the timber supports below the stairway area and cracks in the external walls;
- (ii) as the Tower was a listed building, further consultation would be required with English Heritage prior to any repair works being undertaken;
- (iii) consideration was being given to future long-term uses for the building and suggestions from members of the community would be welcomed.

In response to questions/concerns raised –

- (a) the Park's department would be notified of the safety concerns raised in respect of the fencing running alongside the tower;
- (b) it was envisaged that the best solution for the tower would be for it to remain in the public domain;
- (c) approximately £1.5 million had been transferred to the City Council upon transfer of Mount Batten's ownership from the Plymouth Development Corporation.

Resolved that a further update be presented to the Committee, once the extent and cost of the repairs had been established, and time allowed for consideration of possible future long-term uses.

22. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No new items were put forward.

23. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee considered questions from members of the public on the following matters –

- (i) reconfiguration of Embankment Lane;
- (ii) installation of 'slow' sign at junction of St. John's Road and Church Hill Road;
- (iii) Radford Castle;
- (iv) ownership of access road to public slipway at Mount Batten;
- (v) overnight parking of motor homes at Mount Batten;
- (vi) parking and yellow lines along Lawrence Road;

- (vii) public toilet opening hours;
- (viii) keep clear sign at junction of Eastfield Avenue with Hooe Road;
- (ix) excavation of the public highway outside the newsagents on the Broadway;
- (x) contracting out of the City Council's highways function;
- (xi) anti-social behaviour injunctions.

Responses were provided as follows –

- (a) with regard to (i) above, full details of the Gdynia Way and Embankment Lane scheme were available on the Council's website;
- (b) with regard to (ii) above, the installation works were now in the hands of the Council's contractor, Amey. Councillor Leaves would make further enquiries on behalf of the elector;
- (c) with regard to (iii) above, there were no plans to sell the castle. Negotiations were under way to lease the building to Devon Historic Building Trust who had plans to use the premises as a café to support local walkers;
- (d) with regard to (iv) above, the road was privately owned and, in order to establish ownership, enquiries would need to be made to the Land Registry for which there would be a charge;
- (e) with regard to (v) above, Councillor Leaves would investigate the erection of an appropriate sign (i.e. 'Overnight Parking Not Permitted');
- (f) with regard to (vi) above, the problem would be looked at on the Committee's tour of Mount Batten immediately following this meeting;
- (g) with regard to (vii) above, Councillor Leaves would investigate why the toilets had been closed at 4.30 p.m. during the summer season;
- (h) with regard to (viii)-(xi) above, responses would be sought from the relevant departments.

24. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Monday 9 November, 2009, at Elburton Methodist Church, Springfield Road, Elburton, Plymouth, commencing at 6.00 p.m.

25. EXEMPT BUSINESS

There were no items of exempt business.