

Budshead, Honicknowle and Southway Area Committee

Wednesday 20 January 2010

PRESENT:

Councillor Monahan, in the Chair.
Councillor Drean, Vice Chair.
Councillors Berrow, Drean, Purnell and Thompson.

Co-opted Representatives: D Dyer, P Ebsworth, D Edwards and R Sharman.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Browne, Lowry, Roberts and Smith.

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.10 pm.

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.

40. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Resolved that Councillor Drean be appointed as Vice-Chair for this meeting.

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

42. MINUTES

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

43. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's Urgent Business.

44. POLICING ISSUES

A representative from Devon and Cornwall Police provided the Committee with an update on policing issues in the area, including the following –

- (i) there was continued decrease in crime overall, though an increase in violent crime in Honicknowle and Whiteleigh;
- (ii) the police held a surgery in Tesco, Transit Way every two weeks;
- (iii) there was to be an additional PCSO in Honicknowle shortly, bringing the number to two;
- (iv) there were problems with motor bikes causing anti social behaviour in the Honicknowle and Whiteleigh areas; the police were carrying out pro-active stop checks and taking a robust stance against such activities, including seizing a motor bike at the weekend;
- (v) there had been a decrease in calls to police regarding Whiteleigh Green who were hoping that this was due to increased police presence, rather than people not bothering to call; people were encouraged to contact the police if there were problems;
- (vi) speed checks in Taunton Avenue had been carried out;
- (vii) there had been an eviction at Winchester Gardens;
- (viii) there had been successful drug warrants issued in Ernesettle;
- (ix) work was ongoing in Kinnaird Crescent;
- (x) regarding issues of speeding in Southway Drive, the limited success of enforcement work had led to this work being discontinued;

- (xi) following traffic accidents involving neighbourhood officers in Southway, the rest of the team would be covering their work;
- (xii) police were working with youth in Southway.

In response to questions raised, those present were advised –

- (xiii) as it was considered by some committee members that the speed check in Taunton Avenue had been carried out in the wrong place, the police representative agreed it would be possible to undertake another speed check where suggested, i.e. the bottom end of Taunton Avenue near Oakham Road bus stop;
- (xiv) eviction at Winchester Avenue –
 - the positive action taken at Winchester Avenue was due to excellent partnership working between the police, other agencies and Whitelgih residents;
 - the police wished to encourage the public to call them so that there could be progress with similar issues;
 - Whitleigh residents thanked ward councillors for keeping them well informed;
- (xv) the Southway surgery would continue next week and would be advertised;
- (xvi) the recent adverse weather had caused a lot of accidents, but police had coped with the changed priorities.

(Vice Chair was in the Chair for the above items.)

45. **THE PLYMOUTH SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY (concentrating on the North of Plymouth)**

The Assistant Director of Community Services (Culture, Sport & Leisure) submitted a report which outlined the aims of the draft Plymouth Sports Facility Strategy. The Assistant Director's representatives advised that –

- (i) it was necessary to know what was currently in place, where the gaps were and what was needed for the future;
- (ii) it was now possible to ask questions about what sporting facilities were required when developments were taking place which would help to lead to informed decisions regarding S106 issues;
- (iii) as an example of what the research had established, there was a significant requirement for bowls facilities in the north of the city, but most of the outdoor bowls provision was based in the south of the city;
- (iv) once consultation on the strategy had been completed and the results analysed, an action plan would be developed;
- (v) it was considered that there would be opportunities through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiatives to meet some of the community's sporting requirements and negotiations with school governing bodies would be undertaken based on the evidence now available.

In response to questions raised, those present were advised that –

- the Council sought to protect green spaces and sports fields in the city;
- the Playing Pitch Strategy was a subsidiary strategy of the Plymouth Sports Facility Strategy and aimed to protect existing playing pitches, e.g. the university site at Ernesettle;
- the Aquatics Strategy was another such strategy and was currently out for consultation;
- the possibility of a swimming pool facility for the community was an option that would be considered through the BSF at John Kitto Community College, dependent on support from the governing body;

- the Life Centre would be an excellent facility with the capability of providing 4 x 25m pools; building was due to commence in February 2010 and the facility should open in November 2011;
- improved swimming facilities at Marjons were due from April 2010, making available 70 hours a week for public use; there was also provision of a new gym;
- with regard to the Widewell playing fields, it was understood that the Council had included covenants covering retention and maintenance of the playing pitches on this site.

Resolved that the officers be thanked for their attendance.

46. **STEPPING STONES TO NATURE - PROJECT SUMMARY**

The 'Stepping Stones to Nature' Community Outreach Officer submitted a summary of the 'Stepping Stones to Nature' project and advised that –

- the Green Space Strategy supported this project;
- there was quite a lot of green space in the city and the aim was to encourage people to use it by working with community groups to achieve improvements;
- there was funding for the project, some of which needed to be spent by March 2010;
- one proposal was to improve the access and play amenities (natural play, e.g. seating, picnic sites) of Woodland Wood Nature Reserve;
- an invitation was extended to all present to attend a stakeholder meeting being held on 2 February 2010, an agenda for which was circulated.

Resolved that the officer be thanked for her attendance.

47. **VEHICLE SPEEDS TAUNTON AVENUE - DATA STATISTICS**

The Assistant Director of Development and Regeneration (Transport) submitted a follow-up statistical report following the speed visor survey carried out in Taunton Avenue.

Following expression of concern under the police item that the survey had been carried out in the wrong place, it was noted that the police had been asked to carry out the survey again in a different area of Taunton Avenue and a further update was awaited (see minute no. 44 (xiii)).

48. **LOCAL ENVIRONMENT FUND**

The Director for Development and Regeneration submitted a report advising of two new finance arrangements relating to this year's Local Environment Fund and highlighting that this allocation must be spent by 31 March 2010 as no carry-forwards into the next financial year were to be allowed.

Resolved that any proposals that committee members or members of the public had should be forwarded to the Chair as soon as possible.

49. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No future items were identified on this occasion. Those present were requested to forward any requests for items to the Chair, with sufficient advance notice.

50. **QUESTION TIME FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

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

- (i) any progress on the Whitleigh Housing Office manager issue; an example of a problem was that at the last PACT meeting, the Whitleigh Housing Office manager had promised that after the changeover to Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) there would be monthly meetings held at the Whitleigh Housing Office but none had yet taken place;

- (ii) whether or not there was any truth regarding the following rumours in respect of Plymouth City Council (PCC) employees –
 - that PCC employees got a rebate on Council tax;
 - that free transport was laid on to take council employees to the Civic Centre;
 - that a levy would be put on Council tax to fill the council's pensions deficit;
- (iii) any progress on the Whitleigh Community Centre, minute 38 (a) referred;
- (iv) any progress with the planting of trees at the back of Taunton Avenue, minute 38 (c) referred;
- (v) consideration of the use of Chaucer Primary School, which was being closed, as a community centre;
- (vi) recurrence of the problem of refuse workers leaving rubbish on the side of roads in the Whitleigh area;
- (vii) the possibility of the community using meeting room facilities at the new church in Whitleigh;
- (viii) delay in installation of a resident's ramp.

Members responded as follows –

- (a) with regard to (i) above –
 - elected members had recently been provided with a protocol by PCH and the intention was to hold quarterly meetings between the Council and PCH;
 - it was necessary for members to have specific details that they could raise with PCH and residents were encouraged to provide them with examples;
 - the example raised this evening would be taken forward with PCH;
- (b) with regard to (ii) above –
 - PCC employees did not receive any rebate on Council tax;
 - PCC employees were not provided with free transport to work;
 - as with all pension funds, there was currently a deficit with the Council's pension fund (part of the Devon County Council pension fund) and providing pensions, to which employees also contributed, was part of the cost of employing people; the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property, People and Governance would be requested to provide a written response to the next meeting on the subject;
- (c) with regard to (iii) above, the new owner had been requested to contact the Council but had not yet done so;
- (d) with regard to (iv) above, Councillor Thompson agreed to follow up the matter again with officers;
- (e) with regard to (vi) above, ward councillors would follow up this issue with the Assistant Director of Community Services (Environmental Services);
- (f) with regard to (vii) above, it was understood that the meeting rooms at St Chad's could be used by the community but confirmation was being sought;
- (g) with regard to (viii) above, Councillor Drean agreed to follow up the matter with PCC.

Resolved that a written response be provided in respect of item (v) above, in accordance with the Constitution.

51. **DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Resolved that the date, time and venue of the next meeting, i.e. 6.30pm on Wednesday, 10 March 2010 at Windsor House, Tavistock Road, be noted.