
MEETING	FISHERGATE WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	10 OCTOBER 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS D'AGORNE AND TAYLOR
APOLOGIES	

1. WARD TEAM SURGERY

In the Ward Team Surgery, held 7 – 7.30pm, there was an opportunity to talk to:

- Ward councillors – Cllr Andy D'Agorne and Cllr Dave Taylor;
- Clair Bailey, CYC Street Environment Officer;
- PS Andy Haigh & PC Joanne Brooke, North Yorkshire Police – Fishergate Neighbourhood Policing Team; and
- Graeme Dawson, CYC Neighbourhood Management Officer.

2. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

PS Andy Haigh introduced the meeting to PC Joanne Brooke, who has joined Fishergate Neighbourhood Policing Team. He reported an overall drop in crime in the ward of 19% compared to the same seven month period last year. Where lead thefts from rooves were an issue that had been raised at Ward Committee in past months, following police action there had been none reported for 2-3 months.

Questions:

Asked to explain the fall in crime, PS Haigh attributed the introduction of the dedicated ward Neighbourhood Policing Team in January 07 (which numbers one PC, 2 PCSO's and 1 Sergeant) giving the police ability to better target local issues. This team gives more opportunity for high-visibility patrols in the area. Since the Team's introduction there is also better communication now between the public and police.

Further breaking the crime figures down, PS Haigh was able to say that violence fell by 22%; serious violence leading to wounding fell by 35%; and sexual crime fell by 13%.

A resident was concerned by cyclists and the nuisance and danger they present when riding on the pavement. His dealings with the PCSO had led to some cyclists being fined, but he asked whether there was scope to bring in a bylaw for York leading to a £100 fine for cycling on the pavement. Cllr Taylor advised that there wasn't that power within the council. PS Haigh said although the police would continue to deal with this and other cycling issues, such as cyclists riding in the dark without lights – in which case cyclists are required to present themselves with bicycle lights to the police within a number of days, to avoid a fine – he felt it would always be an ongoing issue.

A resident raised the issue of the security of the Discuss Bungalows site when residents vacate it before its redevelopment. Cllr D'Agorne asked residents to be vigilant and pass on concerns to police. There is a meeting scheduled for the week commencing 15th October 07 for the police to meet project leaders on the Discuss redevelopment.

3. ACCESSIBLE ARTS / MELBOURNE FILMMAKERS

Rose Kent, General Manager, Accessible Arts expressed her thanks to the Ward Committee for ward grants to Accessible Arts for new chairs and tables at the Melbourne Centre, which are being used this evening for the Ward Committee Meeting.

Councillors informed the meeting that they have allocated their £2000 2007/8 Youth Fund to Cube Media at Accessible Arts, to deliver the Melbourne Filmmakers project in the early part of 2008.

Rose Kent explained the Melbourne Filmmakers project would build on work already carried out in Summer 2007. A film club for young people would be set up to work on an intergenerational animated film, bringing together young and old.

Councillors thanked Rose and wished Cube Media / Accessible Arts well in their wish to remain based in the Melbourne Centre.

4. LEISURE REVIEW REPORT AND OPTIONS FOR A CITY CENTRE SWIMMING POOL

Charlie Croft, Assistant Director, Lifelong Learning & Leisure) addressed the meeting on the subject of swimming provision in York.

The incoming council in May wished to review swimming arrangements in the city. The review went back to first principles: what kind of facilities were needed in York?

Findings reconfirmed 2000's vision: swimming facilities sufficient for pay as you go family swimming; for club use; for regular fitness and competitions; good facilities for school children; and accessible to all in the community.

At present Yearsley Pool is in the final stages of refurbishment, Edmund Wilson Pool is to be replaced with a new pool at York High School.

On a model developed by Sport England York is short of 12 lanes of 25m length swimming water. By 2015 given the city's growing population there will be need for 16 extra lanes.

Slightly different uses for different swimming pools are envisaged.

As part of the plan the council has looked into the possibility of a community pool in the city centre.

Looking at different sites, costs would be around £10 million for a car park site and £6-7 million on other, non car park sites. 1800 sq. metres of space is needed for a pool.

After the Yearsley improvements and York High School redevelopments, there is a current budget of £2 million for further developments of swimming pools in the city. Looking at current available central space Hungate's site plan would only allow 1000 sq. metres. Piccadilly is not big enough. St George's Field Car Park is big enough. There has been a swimming pool on that site in the past. However St George's is currently subject to regular flooding. Flood protection costs would push the costs there to £15 million.

There is provision, and a duty, in the University of York Heslington East expansion plans for a new 12 lane 25 metre swimming pool (split between two pools) with joint university / community use. However should the council co-finance the pool, using the £2 million sum, the CYC will have more influence over both the usage of the pool, and be able to bring forward its development timetable.

The University scheme could be completed by 2011. From 2012 – 2015 work could then turn to siteing a new city centre pool on a major development site, as there is major redevelopment potential currently with the York Central / Northwest land.

Questions

- Does the Sport England model include rising student population, especially given the Heslington East expansion?
Action - Charlie Croft to find out, and report back to the meeting.

- How does the city ensure access to a University of York pool?

Planning permission commits the University to the provision of a joint university / community pool. Should CYC commit their funding to the project, a legally binding agreement will be drawn up committing the University to certain undertakings regarding access arrangements.

- Would the bus route extend to serve the new pool?

Yes, envisaged to be directly outside of the pool.

- Does the Report look at other leisure facilities?

No, but it suggest a further set of papers are prepared to look at the need in the city for a full range of leisure facilities, alongside swimming.

- Does development land have to be presently council-owned?

No, but it does make issues easier if it is.

- Is the Foss Islands area an option? Or Kent Street Car Park?

Not any more at Foss Islands. There is not enough current space. Kent Street Car Park multi-storey car park has been sold, leaving the remaining site there too small.

- Cllr D'Agorne asked: is there opportunity to give greater community use to existing pools in the city?

Few of the existing school pools meets vision for community use. There are up to 15 pools in the city in total, but are small, and without current adequate reception / changing facilities for public use, or have capacity to have these facilities added.

- Cllr Taylor stated that he felt Fishergate residents were disappointed at the closing of the Barbican facilities and there being no potential for a city centre replacement for years to come. Why couldn't the pool be put at the Hungate development, under the new CYC offices?

To this Charlie Croft replied that the Hungate development was in advanced stages of planning. The current £2 million swimming budget just doesn't have the leverage over the whole Hungate project to justify delaying it and redesigning. Also swimming pools have a shorter working lifespan than other buildings and this adds further difficulties.

- What benchmarking is there for other facilities?

Benchmarking models do exist – for instance York is currently short of an area of sports hall provision equivalent to 25 badminton courts. Charlie Croft went on to say that models could only go so far though, and that provision of quality facilities in a community brought its own demand, as in the example of Norwich.

5. FESTIVAL OF IDEAS 2

Festival of Ideas 2 is a joint city-wide consultation to inform to linked pieces of council policy: the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Community Strategy. It is considering issues such as whether we have more family housing rather than flats, environmental issues, transport etc.

Varied methods of engaging residents have been employed, including caravans in the city centre, and at supermarkets, a two-session City Summit on 16 October, and online survey.

Questions

- Cllr D'Agorne asked how the LDF linked to the Community Strategy in practice.

Some of the Community Strategy has a planning element, some does not. For instance questions of how much housing should be built, and issues around environment and sustainability.

- A resident stated that economic growth depends on housing. Tradition industry has declined, while the university and science has increased in York. In recent years there has been the development of the buy-to-let market in housing. They felt that students should be housed on campus, thus freeing up more family homes.

The resident was encouraged to feed these views in. Cllr Taylor stated that the council should have stronger management of Houses of Multiple Occupancy. Currently there are many instances of students living in 4's or 5's as if a family, and therefore there is not much regulation.

- There was concern raised of shops being turned into flats, and back gardens being built upon.

Again, please feed these views in – the Festival of Ideas 2 gives a fresh opportunity to shape important policy.

- A view was expressed that living outside the city centre was not just about differences in housing, but rather that rural areas have more facilities than areas such as Fishergate.

Under the previous Local Plan policy perhaps housing may have been considered narrowly; under the LDF issues can be viewed more broadly. There is currently also an Open Spaces Study being currently carried out. As part of the LDF it is recognised that the city centre has separate needs, so a separate city centre plan is also being drawn up. Also, York is not just one area, but a collection of communities, and so issues are being studied separately. Cllr D'Agorne mentioned the importance of local centres, and said the study should look at whether they are becoming marginal or need a new approach.

6. 2008 / 09 WARD COMMITTEE SCHEMES

It was announced to the meeting that members had agreed to include the Community Ranger Service as a ward scheme proposal, but that this had been missed from the published list. Residents were therefore asked to debate the scheme before an indicative vote was taken on the meeting's opinion.

In favour of keeping the Community Rangers: 1, Against 7

A resident spoke in favour of scheme FS-08-13 and commented that people do speed in the Grange Street area, so welcomed work to stop this.

A resident spoke in favour of the ramp down to New Walk at Hartoft Street.

7. HAVE YOUR SAY

The York in Bloom flowerpots are back in front of Fishergate shops.

Lighting on the Millennium Bridge is a concern for Cllr D'Agorne.

Jonathan Tyler independently chaired the meeting.

[The meeting started at 7.00 pm and finished at 9.25 pm].