

MEETING	CLIFTON WARD COMMITTEE
DATE	21 MAY 2013
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS DOUGLAS, KING AND SCOTT Rachel Stewart, Street Environment Officer PCSO Joby Lewis & PCSO Mel Parkin Kay Bailey, Neighbourhood Manager, CYC Mary Bailey, Head of Communities & Equalities, CYC Ruth Stephenson & Simon Parrett, Sustainable Transport Dept, CYC Councillor Dave Merrett 19 RESIDENTS

1. WARD SURGERY/DROP IN

Prior to the start of the formal meeting, residents had the opportunity to speak to the Ward Councillors, the Street Environment Officer and members of the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Councillor Douglas opened the formal meeting at 7.30pm.

2. MAIN MEETING

The minutes of the last formal ward meeting held on 28th June 2012 were agreed to be a true and accurate record.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

PCSO Joby Lewis gave an overview on recent Crime and Community Safety issues in the ward, and the following points were raised:

- Overall crime figures for the ward were down by 42% from the previous year. Burglary of dwellings was down by 83.3%; other burglary incidents were down by 82%; and criminal damage was down by 46.7%. There had been a

50% reduction in drug offences and sexual offences, and a reduction by 72.7% of thefts from vehicles.

- PCSO Lewis reported that they had just come to the end of a week long initiative on Rogue Traders, raising awareness with local residents and giving out preventative advice. He noted that this was a national initiative and had been also undertaken across the city. PCSO Lewis advised that cold calling control zones had been set up in particular streets within the ward, and the Safer Neighbourhood Team would be interested in hearing from any residents who had been experiencing problems or harassment from cold callers.
- PCSO Lewis then reported that the SNT had been working to forge better links with community groups, to ensure that everyone was aware of and had access to the services which are available to them. This included work with the Turkish Women's Group and Number 22 The Avenue.
- New Neighbourhood Watch schemes had been set up, and existing schemes were being strengthened.
- PCSO Lewis informed residents about Operation Joypad, an initiative to combat burglaries and theft from vehicles. He advised that officers were checking houses and vehicles in the area and raising awareness with residents about the importance of keeping their property secure.
- Finally, PCSO Lewis advised that they were trialling a new approach to anti-social behaviour, giving it a more community-led focus. He noted that there was not a serious issue in the ward at present, but there was a possibility incidents may increase in the summer months with lighter evenings. PCSO Lewis advised that the intention would be to consult with residents on local issues, and ask for feedback on how they would like these issues to be dealt with in order to move forward. He noted that a number of meetings were planned to discuss this, and encouraged residents to get involved.

In response to a question regarding a sharp rise across North Yorkshire in the number of thefts from lock-ups and garage buildings, PCSO Lewis noted that this was an issue they were aware of. He advised that the law on scrap metal dealings had now changed, making it impossible to trade for cash, in an effort to reduce the number of thefts for scrap. PCSO Lewis further advised that portable, high value items were usually targeted, and that the Safer Neighbourhood Team could provide advice

on securing outbuildings such as sheds if required. He also reported on the Organised Crime Group initiative, which focussed on gathering intelligence and carrying out surveillance on known offenders in order to secure grounds for prosecution.

Residents asked for clarification about their rights in relation to cold callers. PCSO Lewis advised that there was no law against knocking on the door, but that it would be a civil offence if they did not leave when asked to. He asked residents to report any incidents of cold calling in the area, by phoning 101, as their presence was a concern that needed to be dealt with. In response to a question about how quickly officers would attend any call, PCSO Lewis advised that this was dependent on resources, but stressed that this issue was a priority.

Councillor Douglas thanked PCSOs Lewis and Parkin for attending, and they left the meeting.

4. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT INCLUDING LENDAL BRIDGE TRIAL RESTRICTIONS

Councillor Douglas introduced Ruth Stephenson and Simon Parrett from the Sustainable Transport department at CYC, who were attending to give a presentation and answer residents' questions about the trial traffic restrictions on Lendal Bridge.

Ruth Stephenson began by giving a presentation outlining the rationale for the trial, and the following points were highlighted:

- Proposed investment of approximately £40m in the city centre, particularly around the Theatre Royal, Exhibition Square and Duncombe Place. A reduction in traffic in this area would support this.
- There was an expectation based on studies from other cities around Europe that a general improvement in public spaces in the city centre would benefit the economy.
- Traffic levels are expected to increase in the future, and there needs to be a plan in place to deal with this. The proposed trial would look to secure improvements to the reliability of bus services, and to develop the public transport system.
- External funding has also been received to develop the bus services and other sustainable transport improvements.

In summary, the two main aims of the trial would be to improve the areas around Exhibition Square and Duncombe Place with a reduction in traffic, and to enhance the reliability of the bus services.

Ruth noted that Lendal Bridge is a heavily pedestrianised area, and the majority of traffic crossing the bridge did so either on foot, by bike or by bus. The trial aimed to improve the traffic congestion by restricting car travel over the bridge. She advised that the trial would last for at least six months (though less if there were significant problems occurring), and would begin in August. Priority access would be given to buses, cycles, pedestrians and emergency vehicles. Taxis would also be given access, but for the purposes of the trial period only. Restrictions would be in place during the current footstreet hours of 10.30am to 5pm, and would be enforced using ANPR cameras.

Ruth then outlined a number of mitigation strategies to deal with potential issues. She noted that there was a significant amount of detail still to work out in relation to the trial, and a working group had been set up specifically to undertake this. Residents were encouraged to forward any queries or comments about the trial to the email address – lendalbridge@york.gov.uk.

Simon Parrett then gave a presentation to residents on the predicted effects that the trial would have on traffic flow across the rest of the city. He advised that data had been taken from the 2011 traffic model and that potential increases had been calculated for all major routes into the city. It was noted that there was a relatively small traffic increase predicted for the other bridges in both the morning and afternoon peak times.

Areas which were expected to have the most increase in traffic flow, which included Clifton Green, would be monitored and traffic signals altered to try and ease the flow as much as possible.

Questions were invited from residents about the presentation and proposals, and the following points were noted.

* Residents asked whether it was policy to use residential roads as diversionary routes off main roads, as was the case with The Avenue and Westminster Road, as the Highway Design Code restricted this.

It was confirmed that it was not policy to use residential roads

as “rat runs”, though it was recognised that this was an inevitable issue. Simon noted that by trying to identify what were the potential issues now, through modelling, they were looking at ways to mitigate this during the trial, through actions such as altering traffic signals to ease flow where possible.

* In response to concerns about the inevitability of extra traffic and “rat-running”, Councillor King asked if the trial period could also include a blocking off of The Avenue and Westminster Avenue except for access. It was noted that a previous consultation had resulted in the majority of residents not being in favour of blocking the roads. Councillor King argued, however, that this had been based on flawed data, as the questions put to residents had not indicated where on the roads the blocks would be. Ruth advised that this issue would be a part of the monitoring focus. It was agreed that there was a political decision to be made here, and that if current mitigation strategies failed to manage the situation, it would need to be revisited.

* Councillor Scott asked how the modelling had been calculated, as previous computer models had been criticised as inaccurate by the ombudsman. It was agreed that there needed to be a confidence in the modelling and that there was sufficient monitoring of the situation. Councillors agreed that they needed to be sure that planned mitigation strategies were sufficient, and that there was a proper set of criteria for evaluation. In addition, Councillors asked that air quality in Clifton, particularly around the green, be monitored as part of the trial. Simon noted that there was a network of diffusion tubes in place to monitor air quality, though the impact assessment may not give accurate feedback due to the length of the trial. He advised that they were also looking at further models to assess this issue.

* A number of residents commended the trial, noting that it would be a positive move in promoting the city as a whole. A representative from Clifton Green Primary School noted that they supported the reasons behind the trial, and felt that it would be a good way of encouraging the children to use more sustainable methods of transport. A question was raised, however, that given the potential increase in traffic, whether funding could be provided for a crossing patrol in front of the school.

* A question was raised about whether special dispensation would be given in the trial for businesses around Lendal Bridge and Exhibition Square. It was confirmed that no dispensation would be given, and that anyone wishing to access Lendal, Duncombe Place and Exhibition Square would have to use an alternative route. Ruth Stevenson advised that a liaison group had been set up specifically to consult with businesses, recognising the potential impact the trial may have, and working to address these.

* In response to a question about success measures, Ruth advised that these were difficult to predict before the trial had taken place, recognising that traffic would improve in some areas, whilst some would see a traffic increase. She noted that a reduction in bus journey times and traffic levels on the network as a whole would be among a number of factors to assess overall. She advised that there was a certain subjective element, but that there had been no final decision about what data would be used to determine success. It was noted, however, that a full consultation with residents and businesses would form part of the process.

5. HAVE YOUR SAY

The discussion on the Lendal Bridge trial continued, with Councillor Dave Merrett providing residents with further information on the wider context. The following points were noted.

* The traffic growth in the city has doubled since 1978 (the last time Lendal Bridge was closed, due to maintenance), and there were limited options in terms of improving traffic within the city due to road capacity. For this reason, it is necessary to look at changing the way people travel into the city, by encouraging more use of public transport, cycling and walking.

* Reliability of public transport is currently an issue which needs to be resolved, and there is an expectation that this will improve as a result of the proposed trial.

* In addition, the main route for visitors into the city centre from the station takes them over Lendal Bridge, and pedestrian crossings on this route are currently unsuitable due to the level of traffic.

* Councillor Merrett advised there was an opportunity with this trial to transform the spaces around Bootham Bar, Exhibition

Square and St Leonards Place for both visitors and residents alike.

* In addition to the Lendal Bridge proposals, around £18m of investment was being used to target improvements to the outer ring road (in conjunction with West Yorkshire Council), increased Park and Ride services (including one at Clifton Moor), further bus priority routes on Fulford Road and the creation of a bus interchange at the railway station to provide a turning point.

Residents asked whether maps would be produced for visiting motorists, to advise them of the road closures. Ruth Stevenson advised that this was part of the project plan, and that satellite navigation companies would also be informed, as well as information being published on the City of York Council website. She noted that this was not currently available, but would be in place before the trial began.

Residents were asked to forward any other questions and concerns regarding the trial to the lendalbridge@york.gov.uk address, or to Councillor Merrett.

The following points were also raised under “Have Your Say”:

* One resident referred to the minutes of the previous meeting, where it had been noted that fares for intermediate stops on the Park and Ride routes were more expensive than travelling the whole route. The resident noted that he had written to First to ask for clarification on this, but had not received a response. Councillor Merrett advised that fares for intermediate stops on the Park and Ride route did indeed cost more. He explained that this had been a council decision, which had been made in an effort not to undermine the fares of local bus services on the same routes.

* Residents noted that there was still no timetable on the bus stop outside the pharmacy, as reported in the minutes of the previous meeting.

6. WARD PRIORITIES AND WARD BUDGET 2013-14

The allocation of the 2012/13 Ward Committee budget was noted as follows:

Total budget £4,980.

- £250 Clifton Elderberries
- £2,800 Clifton Out and About
- £500 Reflex Dance Group
- £500 Burton Stone Lane Community Hub (*which subsequently closed and the funds were given back to the Ward Committee for redistribution*)
- £500 Clifton Residents' Association
- £200 Hope Community Cafe
- £200 Reflex Dance Group
- £200 Greenfields Community Garden
- £265 green waste collection

A further sum of £4,200 was allocated to Clifton Ward Committee in March 2013. Bids were received and the following grants were awarded:

- £1,500 Clifton Residents' Association in partnership with Treemendous for tree planting
- £100 to help set up clean up/litter pick activities in Ashton Park
- £1,100 Hope Community Cafe for opening during summer holidays
- £1,500 Greenfields Community Garden.

Final reports on these projects are due at the end of June 2013 and this information will be shared at the next informal ward meeting. Overall, there was a £65 underspend.

Councillor Douglas reported that the budget for 2013/14 would be £4,980, as the previous year. Community groups were encouraged to apply for funding for specific projects which would benefit the ward, in particular focussing on the priorities of inclusiveness, environmentally progressiveness and promoting a safer ward. It was noted that application forms were available to take away. Councillor Douglas requested that all applications be submitted as soon as possible and before 31st July 2013, so that a decision could be made by the end of August 2013. Councillor Scott asked residents to encourage any other groups to apply who may not be aware of the funding, so that as wide a range of initiatives as possible could benefit.

7. CLIFTON PLANNING PANEL ANNUAL SELECTION

Councillor Douglas thanked the current members of the planning panel for their work over the last twelve months. All currently serving members were re-elected for a further year:

- Oliver Balme
- Andrew Batterton
- Sarah Daniel
- Jacqueline Fenwick
- Joanna Findlay
- Peter Smith
- Geoffrey Williams

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

Clr H Douglas, Chair