

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH ON 17 DECEMBER 2008**

Present: Councillors Over (Chairman), D Day, S Dalton, Wilkinson and Harrington

Officers in attendance: Paul Phillipson, Executive Director of Operations
Adrian Chapman, Head of Neighbourhood Services
Kevin Tighe, Head of Cultural Services
Carrie Denness, Principle Solicitor
Liz Boome, Performance Scrutiny Officer
Gemma George, Governance Support Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Councillor John Fox. The Panel was informed that Councillor Bella Saltmarsh had resigned as a substitute from the Panel and had been replaced by Councillor Harrington.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held 4 November 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2008 were approved as a correct record.

4. Review of Neighbourhood Investment

The Panel received a report and presentation which detailed the current status of the Neighbourhood Investment Strategy and the outlined proposals for strengthening the future approach

The Neighbourhood Investment Strategy, which was launched in 2007, was developed to ensure that all communities would benefit from growth and regeneration. It was based on three core themes of activity:

- Community Planning – formal medium and long term planning with local community stakeholders which would ensure investment was secured via growth and regeneration plans.
- Strategic Alignment – which ensured that all Council Departments and all key partners were signed up to and operating within the principles of Neighbourhood Investment, and that a shared approach to problem solving was adopted.
- Using data as intelligence – making better use of information and data which helped to make informed decisions about our neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood Investment had received mixed responses from both local communities and key stakeholders. Some areas had embraced the concept of long term community planning whilst others had expressed a stronger desire to focus on current issues affecting their neighbourhood.

An initial review meeting involving key partners had been held in November 2008 at which a new model, which built on the existing Neighbourhood Strategy but responded to local, regional and national policy changes, was discussed focussing on delivering a “neighbourhood management” solution for our communities, essentially a multi-partner approach to problem solving, community planning and driving the improvement agenda, which would connect the ‘bottom up’ (i.e. community engagement, local aspirations, local needs) with the ‘top down’ (i.e. legislation, regional policy, data and intelligence).

Whilst a key focus of the new approach would have been to resolve the root causes of issues affecting a neighbourhood, there would need to be an element of medium and long term planning to ensure the original values of the Neighbourhood Investment Strategy were maintained.

Further key points and issues surrounding the development of Peterborough’s approach to neighbourhood working were highlighted to the Panel. These included:

- Current neighbourhood activity which included:
 - The neighbourhood investment plan which had been set up in order to make sure that everyone would benefit from the growth agenda.
 - Weeks of action which had in the past given good results and had encouraged local resident participation.
 - Street leaders who had responded to community problems such as graffiti, and acted as the eyes and ears of the local community in which they lived.
 - Interaction with Ward Members and the possibility of getting local Councillors to act as links between the community and the public sector.
- The national and local strategic drivers for change which included:
 - Strong and prosperous communities (2006 white paper) which highlighted the principles of connecting communities better.
 - Communities in control, real people, real power (2008 white paper) this was highlighted as being a powerful statement, as it aimed to pass relevant power to local communities.
 - PCC management restructure and the possibilities of further aligning services and building better responses.
- Neighbourhood management and what it should be. It was highlighted to the Panel that the scheme only really existed in full in Greater Dogsthorpe. It would involve residents and service providers working together and also would give elected Members the opportunity to get involved at the heart of local decision making and planning.
- Neighbourhood management and what it shouldn’t be. The Panel was advised that most importantly it should not need lots of new money.
- Neighbourhood management and its key ingredients which included:
 - An appointed neighbourhood manager who would be an essential key contact within a neighbourhood
 - Resident involvement which would be an important factor going forward. It would be vital to build on what was already in place i.e. neighbourhood panels, which could possibly in the future take on broader remits
- The Panel was further advised about possibilities for the future which included the promotion of neighbourhood partnerships and neighbourhood delivery teams, a joint delivery group and a neighbourhoods strategic partnership.

Members were asked to consider and comment on the report and presentation and the following issues were raised:

- Concern was expressed regarding the position of Members and where they would fit in to the model. Members were assured that a similar model had been developed for South Yorkshire and many other local authority areas and had been successful. When implemented properly it would help to support Members as community leaders.
- Further concern was expressed regarding the possibility of the model re-inventing parish councils. Members were further assured that existing local governance arrangements would be respected and not duplicated wherever possible.
- Clarification was sought on the definition of a 'neighbourhood'. Members were advised that the proposed model would be based on three areas across the City which would be set for administration purposes and within these areas there would be smaller sub groups. These areas are coterminous with Children's Services localities as well as Police Sectors
- Members queried the effectiveness of having such large 'neighbourhood' areas. Members were advised that within the 'neighbourhood' areas there would possibly be up to five separate panel areas therefore effectiveness would not be an issue.
- Members further queried the idea of having administrative borders, and would this have an affect on how much knowledge the general public had regarding their areas. Members were further advised that it would be important to present information to communities which was relevant to them, regardless of where they lived in relation to boundaries
- Clarification was sought on the role the general public would play in the neighbourhood panel process, especially if they harboured concerns regarding the area in which they lived. Members were advised that it would be vital to have residents involved and their views and concerns would be listened to. Agreements on priorities would be made though as part of the agreed governance arrangements.
- Concern was expressed regarding the possibility of the public losing heart in the model of delivery was not met. Members were assured that delivery would be of top priority and it would be of the utmost important to have proper processes in place in order to collectively agree solutions.
- Members queried the types of suggestions for projects and initiatives that were likely to be put forward, would they be sensible? Members were assured that all projects and initiatives that might be taken forward would be balanced against data and intelligence, and would be subject to proper advice from experienced officers. Members were advised that action plans from other neighbourhood investments would be brought to a future meeting of the Community Development Scrutiny Panel.
- Concern was expressed regarding the possibility of elected members receiving negative feedback. Members were assured that feedback received from the model delivered in South Yorkshire had been good and overall, elected members had benefitted from excellent service delivery. The overall aim would be to provide true representations of what the community wants, if an area could not be delivered upon then the public would be consulted as to why. Overall it would produce a feeling of community empowerment.
- Members questioned the make up of future panels and queried whether it would affect any current associations that were set up in the areas. Members were informed that as long as communication took place with the associations already standing, changes may not need to be suggested. Overall it would be a good opportunity to engage and to realise the potential of the associations already in place.
- Members queried the length of time it currently takes to deliver some local actions – e.g. clearing flytipping. Members were assured that functions were to be made better through restructure and teams were to be re-aligned to achieve better responses.

ACTION AGREED:

The Panel:

- (i) Noted the current status of the Neighbourhood Investment Strategy; and
- (ii) Noted the outlined proposals for strengthening the approach in the future

5. Peterborough Crematorium Mercury Abatement

At the request of its Chairman, a report was submitted to the Panel detailing, by way of an update, the decision taken by the Leader of the Council in relation to compliance with new legislation affecting the Crematorium which would come into force on 31 December 2012.

Crematoria had been regulated under the terms of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and the subsequent Pollution Prevention and Control (England and Wales) Regulations 2000, since 1991. Cremators were required to be upgraded or replaced by 1998 to ensure that they met the environmental standards laid down in the Process Guidance Notes, PG5/2 (95). Cremators in use at the Peterborough Crematorium had already met this standard.

The UK had an obligation under the OSPAR convention to prevent, or reduce, the disposal into the environment of mercury from human remains. Consequently, DEFRA had stated that 50% of all cremations at existing crematoria must be subject to mercury abatement by 31 December 2012.

DEFRA required all Local Authorities operating crematoria to provide their regulator with the following information by 31 October 2008:

- Whether it intended to fit equipment to abate mercury emissions from the crematorium by 31 December 2012; and
- If abatement equipment would be fitted, and to specify how many of the cremators it would be fitted to, and
 - What proportion of cremations at the installation it intended to be subject to abatement measures;
 - What steps had been taken to arrange
 - financing of the purchase and installation of the abatement equipment
 - procurement of the abatement equipment; and
 - The dates when the equipment would be installed and commissioned, at each crematorium, and the evidence showing how those dates would be achieved; or
 - If those dates were not fixed by 31 October, the likely date when they would be fixed; or
- If abatement would not be fitted or would be fitted in relation to less than 50% of cremations (based on 2003 figures)
- Specify what burden sharing arrangements it intended or had put in place to offset the cost of abatement at one or more other crematoria in accordance with statutory guidance note AQ1 (05)2, which included the name of the burden sharing scheme or the name of the crematoria with which arrangements had been made;
- Provide written evidence of any such arrangements; and
- Specify what arrangements were put in place; or
- If the arrangements had not been fixed by 31 October, the likely date when they would be fixed

In response to this requirement and following consideration by the Leader of the Council it had been agreed that:

- The Council would install appropriate plant and equipment to abate Mercury by 31 December 2012.
- The project would be self funding using prudential borrowing under a “spend to save” scheme.
- The Regulator (Environmental Health) would be informed of the detailed arrangements by 31 October 2008 in accordance with the statutory directive.

Further points were highlighted to the Panel regarding the importance of reducing the quantity of mercury emissions, including:

- It would be more cost effective to reduce mercury emissions as funding would be available in return from the CAMEO (Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions) scheme, the basis of this scheme being that each crematorium would pay a fee for each cremation carried out and those crematoria that had installed abatement plant would receive a 200% return on their investment. Those crematoria that were not abating would pay into the scheme and receive nothing in return.
- Reducing mercury emissions would be a key contribution towards the Council’s aspirations of becoming an environmental capital.
- The cost of replacing the cremators entirely would be less than it would be to run the existing cremators with abatement.
- Replacing the cremators that already existed would provide 100% abatement and would therefore demonstrate a strong commitment by the Council.
- The target for 100% mercury abatement would be 2013, and it would be included in the 2009 business plan.

Members were asked to consider and comment on the report and the following issues were raised:

- Members sought clarification on the process for mercury removal. Members were advised that mercury removal involved a carbon filter, based on a honeycomb mesh which extracted the fumes.
- Members questioned the possibility of working with the NHS to try and reduce the number of mercury fillings used in patients, as these were the primary cause of mercury emissions. Members were advised that unfortunately, as they were cheap, there were no plans to stop using mercury fillings.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

6. Executive Decisions

The Panel considered the following Executive Decisions made since the last meeting:

- Peterborough Crematorium Mercury Abatement
- Corn Exchange, Peterborough
- Streets, Squares and Spaces Strategy Phase One Cathedral Square works – appointment of contractor using the Midlands Work Framework Contract 3

There were no requests from the Panel for any further information on the items.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

7. Forward Plan

The latest version of the Forward Plan was presented to the Panel for consideration.

The Chairman of the Panel requested it to be noted in the minutes that he expressed concerns regarding not being consulted on a key decision affecting his ward. He was advised that his concerns would be conveyed to the relevant parties.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the Forward Plan.

8. Feedback and Update Report

The Panel received a report which provided an overview of the recently formed Cultural Services Pricing Review Group.

Members were advised that an update report on the Group would be provided following the conclusion of their work in January 2009.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

9. Work Programme

The Panel received the latest version of the Work Programme for consideration.

Items to be scheduled into the work plan were discussed and dates were suggested for several of the items.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the latest version of the Work Programme.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 20 January 2009 in the Bourges and Viersen Rooms.

The meeting began at 7pm and ended at 8.15pm.

CHAIRMAN