

COWLEY AREA COMMITTEE

Wednesday 3rd October 2007

COUNCILLORS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MEETING: The Chair (Councillor Bryan Keen), Councillors Mohammed Niaz Abbasi, Sabir Hussain Mirza and Bob Timbs

COUNCILLORS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE MEETING: Councillor Shah Jahan Khan

COUNTY COUNCILLORS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MEETING: County Councillors Barbara Gatehouse and John Sanders

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE THE MEETING: Angela Cristofoli (Area Co-ordinator), and Mathew Metcalfe and Daniel Smith (Legal and Democratic Services)

OFFICERS PRESENT FOR PART OF THE MEETING: Felicity Byrne (Planning), John Wade (Leisure and Cultural Services), and Kate Stratford (city Works)

63. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from City Councillor Sajjid Malik and County Councillor Olive McIntosh-Stedman.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were made.

65. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair agreed to certify as urgent business a note of the Planning Services Business Manager which details the planning appeals received and decided during August 2007 (minute 73 refers).

66. OPEN SESSION

(1) Yellow lines at the entrance to the Barns Road Allotments

The Committee agreed to pass a request received from Sid Castle for the double yellow lines to be refreshed at the entrance to the Barns Road Allotments to the City Works Business Manager and request that he liaise with the Oxfordshire County Council on marking 'Keep Clear' signage on the road.

(2) Charging young people for football pitch hire

Sid Castle felt that it was wrong to charge young people for the hire of football pitches. In response John Wade said that the charge covered the cost of marking out the pitches each week, repairing the pitches following games and the maintenance of the changing rooms. He added that the fees had been agreed by full Council, when it set the budget for the 2007/08 financial year.

The Committee agreed to note the position.

(3) Cars parked outside Cowley St. James School, Oxford

David Cook a local resident said that there was a major problem with parents parking their cars outside the Cowley St. James School, which was blocking residents of the area from getting in or out of their streets. He also said that there was no School Crossing Patrol person to help the children cross the road.

County Councillor John Sanders said that he was continuing to pursue the making of a County wide traffic order so that the zig-zag lines outside of schools could be enforced, but there was a resource and funding issue with this at the County Council.

The Committee was informed by the Police, that the enforcement of parking restrictions in the area, especially where the double yellow lines were, was the responsibility of Control Plus, who were the contractors for the County Council. The Police only became involved if the cars were causing an obstruction or were dangerously parking.

The Committee agreed to note that the enforcement of the restrictions were the responsibility of Control Plus.

(4) Oxford Wheels Project

Jack Richens from the Oxford Wheels Project informed the Committee that a petition was being collected seeking support for a Skate Park in the area and that he would be meeting with Parks Officers and Planning Officers to discuss further the proposal for a Skate Park.

The Committee agreed to note the position.

(5) Ridley Road Recreation Ground

Gus Bianchini said that mothers and children were afraid to use the Ridley Road Recreation Ground due to its dilapidated state and that the entrances were overgrown. He asked when would the Recreation Ground be brought up to a usable condition so that users could feel safe again.

The Committee agreed to pass these concerns to the Parks Manager for investigation and action where necessary and to request details of the costs associated with replacing the goal posts in the Recreation Ground.

(6) Cycle Way between Horspath Road and The Slade

Gus Bianchini said that it appeared that the general tidy up and erection of dog bins along the cycle way had not yet taken place and wondered when this would happen.

The Committee agreed to pass the issue to the Parks Manager for further investigation.

(7) Hollow Way – Parking issues

The Committee agreed to note a request for the Oxfordshire County Council to look again at the parking restrictions by the shops in Hollow Way and as this was not a City Council responsibility, to note that County Councillor Gatehouse agreed to take the issue, back to Oxfordshire County Council Highways Officers.

67. RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF HIGHWAYS GATE IN COWLEY

The Area Co-ordinator submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which informed the Area Committee of the outcome of the local consultation on the location of the highways gate in Phipps Road and asked for agreement on a formal response to be forwarded to the Oxfordshire County Council.

Angela Cristofoli introduced the report and said that the normal response rate for a postal survey was approximately 24%, however the response to this survey was 55% which was an extremely good result. She said that once the results were analysed, it should be that 54% of the respondents wanted the highways gate relocated.

Councillor Jahan Khan said that he was very pleased with the result and that it was very important that the actual residents were surveyed rather than seeking the views of the users of the road as they may not have lived there.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To welcome the high response rate to the survey which was 55%;
- (b) To note that the majority of the residents who responded to the survey (54%) were in favour of relocating the highways gate to the end of Phipps Road at the Bailey Road end;
- (c) To reiterate that the Cowley Area Committee had previously agreed to fund the costs associated with the relocation of the gate at its meeting on 1st November 2006;

- (d) To highlight that the original Oxfordshire County Council Traffic Survey report had stated that there might be some merit in relocating the highway gate to remove rat-running, to improve the environment for residents and that there was a high level of vehicles exceeding 30mph and to reiterate these findings again to the Oxfordshire County Council Transport Decision Committee;
- (e) To pass the recommendations above to the Oxfordshire County Council Transport Decision Committee as the formal response from the Oxford City Council Cowley Area Committee stating that the Cowley Area Committee supported the majority view from the survey that the highways gate should be relocated.

68. COWLEY MARSH PLAY AREA

The Interim Leisure and Cultural Services Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which sought the Area Committees approval to upgrade the equipment in the new Cowley Marsh Play Area.

The Committee agreed to approve additional S106 Developer Contribution funding being used to upgrade the play equipment in the new play area in the Cowley Marsh Recreation Ground.

69. LOCKING OF FLORENCE PARK

The Interim Leisure and Cultural Services Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which provided details of the current position with regard to the financial situation of the Parks Service and also provided options for reducing service provision in Florence Park to enable the park to be locked within existing budget resources.

John Wade introduced the report and that he had met with Ward Councillors and the Friends of Florence Park and he was asked to submit options on how the locking of the Park during the evening at weekends could be achieved. He said that Parks Officers wanted to lock the Park in the evening over the weekends, however there was simply not the budget to do this without cutting back on other area of service provision such as the planting of the flower beds. He also said that the option of having the Friends of Florence Park lock the Park in the evening on weekends was ruled out on insurance and health and safety reasons.

Chris Gould said that to remove the flowerbeds to fund the locking of the park would destroy the Park, but not to lock the Park would be a danger to local residents whose properties bordered the Park. He said that he is not just worried about the funding implications for this year, but for next year and the years after that.

John Todd said that the Park remained beautiful due to the fact that it was locked in the evenings. To stop locking the Park would lead to its ruination and that the Parks budget would end up being used to repair damage caused because the Park was not locked. He added that not locking the gates could also affect the surrounding estate as it could become a magnet for crime and people will move away.

John Wade in response to comments again said that Officers wanted to lock the Park in the evenings at weekend, but there was no budget. He said that whether the Park was locked or not, vandalism could still occur as happened recently during a weeknight when the Park was locked and that the income from the Family Centre which was £3500 per year was used to maintain Park, however there was a budget shortfall on income from such facilities. He said that it took a minimum of 1 hour for lock the Park, ensuring that it was empty before the gates were locked. He added that he had produced the report at the request of Ward Councillors and the Friends of the Park into the options available, but the fact still remained that he was limited on options available as the funding was just not there.

County Councillor Gatehouse said that the Park was a beautiful Park and it would be sacrilege to remove the flowerbeds and does not think that any Parks should be left unlocked in the evenings.

Councillor Jahan Khan said that he disagreed with the report on a number of points as he felt that not all of the options, which had previously been raised, had been looked at despite the time available to do so. He requested a complete breakdown of what the £9k paid for, what sponsorship opportunities had been investigated and why was the locking/unlocking was for one night (Friday) and Saturday and Sunday mornings.

In response John Wade said that sponsorship had been looked at, however as the Park was not on a main road and clearly visible, interest had not been great, however a local school did sponsor one of the flower beds. He added that there was an error in the report and that Park was locked on Friday/Saturday/Sunday nights and unlocked on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Councillor Jahan Khan said that there had to be other ways of dealing with the locking issues and asked if the Parks Rangers could be used. In response John Wade said that there were only 6 Parks Rangers to cover the whole city and that they tried to undertake as much as possible, but there was not enough of them and that it was becoming impossible to keep providing the same levels of service with less funding.

Councillor Keen said that one option would be for the Friends of Florence Park to unlock the gates on a morning and City Council staff to lock the Park on an evening. He said that this could reduce the cost by up to 40%. He said that sponsorship should again be looked at and that the report was not satisfactory, as not all of the options had been considered.

Angela Cristofoli in response to comments on the use of Area Committee Revenue funding said that this funding was not meant may for this type of service and that if it was the provision would have to be made each year, which would reduce the amount of funding available to be used on other projects in the area.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To note the current budget situation within the Parks Service;

- (b) To note that Florence Park was currently locked during the evening at weekends following the Cowley Area Committees request at its meeting on 6th June 2007, and that this was now a budget pressure of £9k on the Parks budget;
- (c) That the Cowley Area Committee would fund the locking of the gate from the 4th October 2007 up to the end of the 2007/08 financial year, with a contribution from the Area Committee Revenue Budget, subject to final details of the costs from the Parks Manager;
- (d) To request the Parks Manager to provide details to Ward Councillors, The Friends of Florence Park and the Area Co-ordinator on the other options such as the Friends of Florence Park unlocking the gates in the mornings, sponsorship etc. and budget information directly related to services provided by Parks for Florence Park including income;
- (e) To note that Councillors would pursue the issue of sponsorship with local businesses/organisations in their Wards;
- (f) To request the Executive Board to include in its base budget for 2008/09 and future years, the cost, which currently was £9k per year, the locking of the Florence Park gates in the evenings at weekends.

70. HORSPATH DEPOT 1, CITY WORKS, HORSPATH ROAD, OXFORD – 07/01959/CT3

The Planning Services Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which detailed an application for the relocation of entrance doors and canopy.

The Committee agreed to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- (i) Development begun within time limit
- (ii) Deemed in accordance with approved plans

71. BMW UK MANUFACTURING LTD GARSINGTON ROAD, OXFORD – 07/01955/FUL

The Planning Services Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which detailed an application for the erection for temporary period of mirror tent for theatre productions with portable buildings for use in association with the theatre use.

The Committee agreed to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- (i) Development begun within time limit
- (ii) Develop in accordance with approved plans
- (iii) Permission to expire 18th January 2012
- (iv) October to January

- (v) Starting times
- (vi) Gate 7 access only
- (vii) Cycle parking

72. 53 PHIPPS ROAD, OXFORD – 07/01966/FUL

The Planning Services Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which detailed an application for a single storey rear conservatory extension.

The Committee agreed to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

- (i) Development begun within time lime
- (ii) Develop in accordance with approved plans
- (iii) Materials - matching

73. PLANNING APPEALS RECEIVED AND DECIDED DURING AUGUST 2007

The Planning Business Manager submitted two tables (previously circulated and now appended) which detailed planning appeals received and decided during August 2007 which the Chair agreed to certify as urgent business.

The Committee agreed to note the information.

74. COMMUNITY CENTRES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL COSTINGS

The Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which identified the true costs of the Community Centres and Community Development in the Area Committee area.

Angela Cristofoli introduced the report in the absence of Craig Buckby who was unable to attend the meeting. She said that this was a first report on budgets associated with Community Centres, and that the management of Community Centres, were the responsibility of Area Committees.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To request that the Asian Cultural Centre was moved from the maintenance list for the Cowley Area Committee area, as this facility was not in the area, but in the East Area Parliament area;
- (b) To request the Community Development Regeneration Manager to supply detailed information on what exactly the work programme was within the Cowley Area Committee area for community development, regeneration, social inclusion, community cohesion, play and youth development, well being, the Active Communities Partnership and local food development as this was not included in the report;

- (c) To note that the figures in the maintenance backlog were the costs to keep the various facilities maintained, not for refurbishment costs.

75. BUS SHELTERS

The City Works Business Manager submitted details (previously circulated now appended) of a presentation that was given to the Area Committee on the replacement of bus shelters across the City.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To note the presentation;
- (b) To note that a list of sites would be circulated to Councillors in due course for their comments;
- (c) To thank Kate Stratford for attending the meeting.

76. CRESCENT ROAD ALL WEATHER PITCH – LONG TERM OPTIONS

The Area Co-ordinator submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which informed the Area Committee of the longer-term options for the Crescent Road all weather pitch/kickabout area.

Angela Cristofoli introduced the report and in response to comments said that should the Committee decide dispose of the site the facility would have to be provided at another location in close proximity and that any sale proceeds would fund this.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To relocate the facility to another site and to offer the Crescent Road site for sale;
- (b) To note that following recommendation (a), that Officer would no develop this option and report back to the Area Committee on progress made.

77. SECTION 42 HIGHWAYS WORKS - BIDS

City Works are preparing estimates for highway schemes to be submitted to the Oxfordshire County Council in November 2007 and the Cowley Area Committee was invited to submit suggestions for possible schemes in the Cowley Area Committee area.

The Committee agreed to suggest the following locations for inclusion in the bid to the Oxfordshire County Council, as they required re-surfacing due the road surfaces being pot-holed:

- (i) St. Lukes Road
- (ii) Coleridge Close
- (iii) Ridgefield Road

78. MINUTES

The Committee agreed the minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting held on 5th September 2007.

79. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- (a) Minute 51(3) – Open Session – Gaisford Road Recreation Ground and Bartholomew Road - Fencing

The Committee agreed to note that a land search had been carried out and that Officers were continuing to establish ownership/responsibility of the fence as the land search did not clearly show who was responsible.

The meeting started at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.40 pm

20 members of the public were present at the start of the meeting with 0 present at the end.

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