

Committee Minutes

Pentlands Local Development Committee

Edinburgh, 16 March 2005

Present:- Councillors Paisley (Convener), Elaine Aitken, Henderson, Fallon, Hunter, Rust, McInnes and Laing.

Apologies:- Apologies were received from Councillors Russell and Scobbie.

In attendance:- 30 representatives of local groups and individuals from 17 local organisations.

1 Minute

a) Pentlands Local Development Committee

The minute of the Committee's meeting of 26 January 2005 was approved as a correct record.

2 Traffic in Greenbank

Following the installation of traffic signals at the junction of Greenbank Road and Comiston Drive, local residents had expressed concern at a substantial increase in traffic flow through the Greenbank area. Particular concern was expressed at the safety of a blind summit near Greenbank Gardens.

Although closure of Greenbank Lane to through traffic had been considered, locals had campaigned against this. The Scottish Ambulance Service and Lothians and Borders Police also considered that closure of the road could have a detrimental affect on service response times. Discussions had followed on the options to closure and Greenbank had been assessed for creation of a 20mph zone. In fact priorities elsewhere suggested that works at Greenbank were unlikely to be carried out in the near future.

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Councillor McInnes recapped on these events and explained plans for further consultation with local residents on the current position and on measures to improve road safety, short of closure of the road. He explained why he was currently constrained from consultation by post and, in the meantime, invited consideration of the cost implications of road safety measures already undertaken and those necessary to ensure that the residents of Greenbank Lane and Road could enjoy a safe environment.

The Committee agreed that–

- (a) the Director of City Development be invited to report to their next meeting on the costs of the road safety measures outlined and
- (b) otherwise the matter be continued and that a Special Meeting be called, as necessary, as soon as local residents' opinions could be canvassed.

(Reference – report by the Director of City Development, submitted.)

3 Children and Families Department

Lynne Porteous, Children and Families Change Support Group, outlined the change process in the Council leading to creation of a new Children and Families Department.

The new structure set out to strengthen partnership working, to ensure that the management capacity, organisation and working supported the Council's focus on quality and performance and reflected the movement towards local management of services. The revised structure proposals for the Children and Families Department having been approved by the Council, the key milestones in development were now -

- April 2005 Children and Families Directorate operational and employees transferred into the new Department
- August 2005 Stage 1 structure in place and neighbourhood and central management arrangements to be operational
- April 2007 Highly integrated local service delivery in neighbourhoods

Engaging stakeholders in the design of the improved services (including children, young people, parents and carers) would be a major focus for the Change Support Team in the coming period. In the development of the new Department, considerable emphasis had been placed on informing, consulting and involving staff members and others in the process. It was proposed to develop a culture of engagement and collaboration with a range of stakeholders on an ongoing basis, looking to build up mechanisms for receiving direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions to identified problems.

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The new department would operate as a devolved service at neighbourhood management level with five neighbourhoods and five community planning catchment areas, commencing in April 2005. As indicated, the change process proper would take place in August aiming for a smooth transition in service delivery, bringing together the best of both services and using resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible. The delivery of targeted and universal services was discussed.

Following questions on the implications for local service delivery and on the findings of the Caleb Ness and Edinburgh Inquiries, the Convener confirmed that other Councils, including Brighton and Inverness, operated on a similar basis. It was also confirmed that the investigation had been a model for consultation and that the current difficulties, exacerbated by a lack of qualified Social Workers, were being addressed as quickly as was possible by a number of initiatives aimed at improved service delivery and use of resources.

Decision

The Committee noted the report and thanked Lynne Porteous for her presentation.

4 Summer Youth Programme 2005

Kevin Mullarkey, Senior Community Education Worker, outlined the youth work programme for 2005 for the Pentlands area and invited comment on the programme being prepared. He explained also, the key principles associated with the programme of choice, accessibility and inclusion within communities, allowing young people to engage and participate, to empower them and offer them a role and to express their ideas. He also commented on the increased focus on dealing with anti-social behaviour and the need to strike a balance between community aspirations and the needs of young people.

In response to questions, he added that the service was already engaging with local networks and partnerships, youth clubs and schools in planning the new programme and outlined the arrangements for publicity and marketing.

Councillor Henderson commented on the changing needs of youth culture and commended the benefit of the programme both to the young people involved and the local community. In response to a question from Councillor Rust on the work with young people by the Fire Service, it was confirmed that there was a willingness to liaise with Lothian and Borders Fire Brigade on their programmes and to involve the police and the fire service in promoting activities. On a question by Councillor Laing, the assessment of challenge and risk, the third party liability insurance provisions were discussed as were, the funding of the programme, the plans for Capelaw Court and the use made of Sighthill skateboarding facility and the needs for liaison with youth organisations in South West and South East Edinburgh.

Decision

The Convener thanked Kevin Mullarkey for his presentation and asked him to respond directly on the issues detailed above as appropriate and, specifically, to liaise with community representatives on responses relative to the summer programme affecting the Fairmilehead, Currie and Morningside areas.

5 Youth Council

Graham Neal, Community Education Service reported on the work of the Pentlands Branch of the Youth Council and their responsibilities in representing the views of young people. The organisation was particularly active in raising issues in transporting young people with disabilities and in setting up a local strategy to involve young people in the new community planning mechanism. He also drew attention to the work of the Youth Service Advisory Committee and involvement with schools and colleges. to represent young people and on a workshop event planned for Carrickvale Community Centre.

Decision

Following discussion on youth issues affecting Community Councils, the Convener thanked Mr Neal for his explanation of the work of the Youth Council.

6 Local Community Planning: Outcomes of Consultation

Norma Cuthbertson, Regeneration Programmes Manager summarised responses received to the consultation exercise on local community planning.

The public, community interests, agencies, community planning partners and Council departments had been involved. The results suggested a broad endorsement of the move to more local partnership arrangements although fundamental questions had been asked about the intended level of devolved decision making.

Support had been expressed for a return to 'natural communities' with comment that the proposals lacked detailed on how the new structures would work and whether or not they would be planned and resourced adequately. Differences also seemed to exist in interpreting the relationship of community planning to neighbourhood management, a distinction further complicated by the recent addition of area housing boards with different boundaries. There was also a perception of tension between central services and the need for local flexibility and responsiveness. It had also been commented that the proposals were influenced by a Council-dominated view of structures, functions and agenda.

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In respect of functions and membership, views seemed divided on the relevance and representative value of Community Councils, alternative community representative arrangements having been proposed in certain areas. It was intended that a report be submitted to Council in the coming weeks outlining the results of the consultation exercise and proposing a revised plan for local governance and community planning.

Decision

The Committee noted the report, thanked Norma Cuthbertson for her explanation of the position and agreed a further report when the detailed proposals on Local Community Planning were available.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Services, submitted))

7 Disabled Parking Bays

Disabled Parking Bays were designated by the Council on request from Blue Badge holders. Representations had been made by residents of the Sighthill, Broomhouse and Parkhead areas for the promotion of Traffic Regulation Orders to restrict and regulate the use of the bays.

Decision

It was noted that the Council had reviewed the situation on disabled parking bays recently and had agreed that no action be taken meantime to promote a Traffic Regulation Order for existing non-enforceable parking bays. It was also noted that the provision of parking bays was not a function delegated to individual Local Development Committee.

(Reference – report by the Director of City Development and letter dated 15 February 2005 by the Director of City Development response to question from the Sighthill, Broomhouse and Parkhead Residents Association, submitted)

8 Review of Traffic Signal Operation at Colinton Road/ Craiglockhart Avenue

Brian Torrance, Traffic Control Manager, City Development Department explained, in response to Councillor Hunter's motion on the removal of the filter on the traffic lights at the junction of Colinton Road and Craiglockhart Avenue, that the filter was unique in the city. He also explained that, depending on the arrival pattern of the traffic, it could be that straight-ahead traffic held up those wishing to turn left when the filter was running. A video survey suggested that relatively few vehicles were able to make the manoeuvre. It was also clear that the highest demand for the left turn was during the morning period.

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It was recommended that a pedestrian detection system be installed and that use of the junction be monitored. Councillor Hunter outlined his reservations at this proposal on the grounds that it could not improve the safety of pedestrians.

Decision

The Committee agreed (a) to note the report and implementation of the traffic light sequence (b) to agree the installation of the pedestrian detection equipment for a trial period and (c) that a further report be submitted in six months on the junction and the revised operation.

(Reference – report by the Director of City Development, submitted.)

9 Local Development Committee Communities Grants Fund

Details were given of the applications which had been received for grants from the Community Grants Fund 2004/5.

A number of grant applications remained to be dealt with. Councillor Fallon having drawn attention to the situation on transfer of the Dove Centre to new premises, he explained that the Centre had submitted a grant application in support of the extra costs associated with the project. That application, together with a number of others, was recommended for consideration in the new financial year. A total of £6,418 remained available from the 2004/5 Quality of Life budget.

Decision

- 1) To award a grant of £3,000 towards the cost of erecting a boundary fence to protect a planted area at Riccarton Road, Currie as detailed in the report.
- 2) That a grant of £3009 be awarded to the Pentland Panthers Youth Organisation towards the cost of new sports equipment and additional coaching courses as shown.
- 3) That a balance of funding of £409 under the Quality of Life heading, be carried forward to 2005/6.
- 4) To continue consideration of the other applications detailed, including the Dove Centre, for further consideration in 2005/6.

(Reference – report dated 24 March 2005 by the Director of Corporate Services, submitted.)

10 Community Grants Fund

Local Development Committees had requested an end of year analysis on Community Grant Fund Awards for 2004/5 to allow consideration of the options for allocating awards in 2005/6.

The award of grants from the Pentlands area budget under the three principal headings of Community Participation, Social Inclusion and Quality of Life were analysed and the awards detailed by Ward area. The trends and options for award were then examined in detail.

Decision

The Committee agreed the following aims for 2005/6 -

- 1) To promote a more even distribution of grants to include wards with little or no uptake, with promotional work to achieve this.
- 2) Awareness raising to increase the number of youth work projects under the Quality of Life Theme.
- 3) That grant levels be restricted to no more than £5000 under normal circumstances.
- 4) To achieve a similar even spending pattern as seen in 2004/5.

(Reference – report by the Head of Strategic Support Services, submitted.)

11 Public Question Time

Members of the public attending the meeting had been invited to submit questions on matters of local concern. The issues and responses given at meeting are detailed in Appendix 1 to this minute.

12 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 18 May 2005 - Venue to be agreed.

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APPENDIX 1

1	Betty Brand, Firrhill Drive Tenants Residents Association	New Kitchens and Bathrooms for Firrhill Drive Residents.	Written response to be provided by Susan Bruce, Area Manager Housing Management / West Edinburgh Local Office
2	Norman Tinlin, Fairmilehead Community Council	Knowledge and expertise of the staff in the Traffic Signals section regarding the operation of traffic signals.	Partial response given, further information to be provided by Brian Torrance, Traffic Control Manager, City Development
3	George Lighthead , Pentland Community Education Centre and Firrhill Community Centre	Charging for the use of school facilities by the Council, under PPP.	Written response to be provided by the Director of Education.
4	Betty Brand, Firrhill Drive Tenants Residents Association	The timescale for getting new parking spaces. Response times from local police.	Written response to be provided by Susan Bruce, Area Manager Housing Management / West Edinburgh Local Office. Written response to be provided by the Chief Constable.
5	John Duffus, Greenbank Road Residents	Lack of improvement by work in Greenbank Lane on speed and volume of traffic.	Answered at meeting by John Gill, Network Manager, Transport Section, City Development
6	Ivor Browne, Wester Hailes Representative Council	Possibility of deducting £200 from pensioners' Council Tax at source.	Written response to be provided by the Director of Finance.