

Parish Council Liaison Forum

A meeting of Parish Council Liaison Forum was held on Monday, 21st December, 2009.

Present: Cllr David Coleman (Chairman), Cllr Barry Woodhouse, Cllr G.Colling (Egglecliffe & Eaglescliffe P.C.), Cllr Feldon (Ingleby Barwick P.C.), Cllr G.Smith (Long Newton P.C.).

Officers: T.Beckwith (CESC); Ms C.Henry, R.McGuckin, M.Rowell, Ms K.Stainthorpe (DNS); P.K.Bell, A.Squires (LD).

Also in attendance:

Apologies: were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Miss Inman, Laing, T.Hampton, J.Walker and Redmarshall P.C.

PCL Declarations of Interest

17/09

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

PCL Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st September 2009

18/09

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st September 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

PCL Draft Tourism & Visitor Economic Strategy 2009

19/09

The Forum was invited to comment on the content of the draft Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy 2009-2015; which had emerged in response to the need to raise the profile of Stockton locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

The strategy provided a framework for strengthening tourism activity and promoting growth in the visitor economy, in and around Stockton on Tees. It would provide the linkage in the process of developing the Stockton Visitor offer within the regional and national context, with the key to success being our ability to develop and work in partnership with a wide range of agencies, businesses, residents, partners and colleagues, to a common agenda. The main purpose of the strategy will be to increase the overall value of tourism to the local economy. Members were advised of the make up of attractions that made up our current Visitor Offer, and it was commented that the area had numerous small attractions that, once added together, made a very large and appealing offer for people visiting the area.

The strategy vision was that by 2015 Stockton-on-Tees would be able to deliver a high quality visitor experience, continually surprising and exciting our visitors with a vibrant, contemporary and diverse offer in a historically rich environment. The strategy provided clear direction and guidelines and summarised our priorities to ensure that all objectives were met and exceeded, whilst complimenting the Stockton Borough Regeneration Strategy, the regional tourism strategy set out by One North East (ONE), and the sub regional Area Tourism Management Plan (ATMAP) from VisitTeesValley (vTv).

The main priority was to increase the visitor stay and spend within the borough by developing the borough as an attractive visitor destination. In order to

achieve this it was proposed to do the following:

- To ensure we are collecting and evaluating data so we can more efficiently target specific audiences
- Actively encourage Travel Trade and Youth groups to the borough and create new events
- Raise standards of the visitor offer throughout the borough by helping to improve quality of accommodation/ attractions/ food offer, whilst ensuring that awareness is raised about environmental issues
- Further develop the events calendar with new and improved festivals and events and establish the Visitor Experience team alongside the events calendar
- Improve the position of Stockton Borough as a short break destination and develop new and existing products, packages and experiences based around the River Tees and its heritage.
- Improve the overall image and perception of the borough, and the entire visitor experience, through improvements and marketing campaigns, with the overall aim of increasing the visitor spend.
- Develop new and existing partnerships and increase Tourism training and development opportunities.

The draft strategy was currently the subject of consultation and it was suggested that copies of the strategy be circulated to all Parish/Town Councils.

RESOLVED that the draft strategy be noted and copies be circulated to each of the Parish/Town Councils for comment.

**PCL
20/09**

Yarm Parking Consultation 2009

Consideration was given to the outcome of Council consultation held in June/July 2009 which sought the views of local residents, businesses and shoppers in Yarm regarding parking issues in the town and immediate vicinity.

In summary, the consultation sought views on the following key principles:-

- Long Stay Parking. Should a new separate facility be provided for free long stay parking?
- Charging for Short Stay Parking. To fund a new facility, charging would have to be introduced. The suggested charge was 20p for first 30 minutes, 50p for first 2 hours and then £1 for each hour thereafter. A Resident's Permit Parking Scheme would also be introduced.
- Location of a new Long Stay Facility. Some suitable sites were identified as initial ideas. These were: Land behind Yarm Health Centre (Brickyard Allotments), Worsall Road Allotments and Land East of Yarm Cemetery Access Road (partly Brickyard Allotments). The consultation also invited views on other suitable sites.
- Extended Disc Parking. Should the current disc parking be extended in the short stay parking spaces from a maximum of 2 hours to 3 hours? In addition, the restrictions could begin from 10 am and end at 4 pm

At the close of the consultation a total of 888 e-mail, web and postal returns had been received. The Forum was provided with a summary of the statistical results; the key messages of which concluded that:-

- There is widespread clear support for an additional long stay car parking facility in Yarm.
- The support for charging for short stay car parking in Yarm had a mixed reception, but in order to be able to deliver a 'new' long stay car park and a residents permit parking scheme, charging in the High Street would be necessary. However in the short term, there is no intention to introduce charging.
- The introduction of a residents permit parking scheme has majority support, particularly from those within the Central Yarm area, whom are directly affected by on-street commuter parking.
- The sites identified in the consultation showed that the Land behind the Medical Centre (Brickyard Allotments) was the most favourable, of those listed. However, the Council is keen to pursue all options available, particularly other potential central Yarm sites.
- The consultation suggests there is no desire to extend the current disc parking from 2 hours to 3 hours maximum.

The Borough Council would now look to develop over the coming months an action plan in recognition of the results received which would look for solutions for the parking problems in Yarm, and as part of this process, the Council would:-

- Actively look for positive solutions, and provide regular feedback to all partners/stakeholders.
- Look to identify sites that may be suitable to accommodate piecemeal or a full 200 space car park. The Borough Council will actively work with landowners, public bodies and other stakeholders to bring these into use, if at all possible. Issues that may need to be considered are layout/access arrangements, proximity to local amenities and any other highway/environmental concerns coming to light as we work through the details. In the short term, charges for existing car parking in Yarm will not be introduced. As sites are identified that are deliverable, charges may be introduced to fund bringing them into use.
- Ensure appropriate consultation is carried out with the wider community on emerging options.
- Make available a list of other sites that have been discounted on technical grounds of size, location or access so that it is clear why they cannot be considered further.

Details of the consultation response had also been provided to Yarm Town Council.

RESOLVED that the outcome of the Yarm Parking consultation be noted.

**PCL
21/09**

Village Bus Update

Consideration was given to a summary of the latest position regarding ensuring bus services operated a connecting Village service. It was noted that as public service transport providers had refocused the services they provide, it had become increasingly difficult to sustain some provision particularly in areas where bus routes were no longer cost effective for them to operate. This Council had undertaken a recent transport Efficiency Improvement & Transformation (EIT) review, which had supported the view that a "Use it or loose it" strategy be adopted.

In June this year it was agreed that the Community transport service would make use of rural bus challenge funding to provide a service in the evening and at weekends in the western villages as a trial, when previous commercial services were withdrawn. The service had since been operating to a defined timetable on an hourly circular route between the villages and Stockton High Street. The total number of registered passengers in the first 6 months was 335. In this period there had been a total of 1119 passenger journeys of which 147 were concessionary.

When the service commenced it was agreed that it would be for a trial period and changes would be introduced following consultation with registered passengers. Recently a survey had been undertaken and a total of 63 responses were received by the closing date last week.

The biggest single comment made was to reduce the frequency and operate the bus from Stockton in both directions to shorten the journey to a maximum of 30minutes. It was therefore proposed to revise the timetable and route from February 2010.

Previously it was noted at the Parish Council Liaison Forum that further opportunities should be explored to develop the services in the spring as an opportunity to access the villages for leisure and walking. Members would be advised of further developments in due course.

It was further noted that on the 8th December 2009, Thornaby Town Council, in partnership with Community Transport, launched a new bus service for concessionary passengers to travel from parts of Thornaby not served by public transport to Stockton/ Thornaby town centres. The service operates between 10.30am and 2.30pm on Monday and Thursday using an existing low floor 15 seat 4 wheelchair/buggy space bus. The route also serves parts of Teesdale including Rochester Court.

There were currently 294 passengers registered to use the service. The first three days of operation had proven popular with a number of passengers travelling on each run. It was intended, as with the village link, to amend the service as the needs of the passengers become more apparent.

Following the EIT review, a number of recommendations were approved including significant changes to the future operation of the Dial a Ride service. It was intended that there would be a phased approach to the changes commencing in April 2010 initially with the introduction of an evening and

weekend taxi service for existing passengers who currently used the service for scheduled trips to access Education courses on a regular basis. The charge for all future Dial a Ride Journeys would be £1.70 to commence no later than April 2010.

Following a period of consultation with registered users the existing day time service would be modified to operate Monday to Friday one bus as demand responsive pre booked service with priority given to medical appointments; and the second bus used to provide a semi scheduled service in defined areas on specific days.

The final phase would be introduced in October 2010 when the service would be replaced completely by a contracted taxi service. The interim period between January and October would provide sufficient time for quality contracts to be negotiated to meet the needs of the passengers.

A consultation document together with an overview of the planned changes would be issued to all registered passengers towards the end of February 2010. The issues raised would be where possible incorporated into the service specification.

RESOLVED that the update report be noted.

**PCL
22/09**

Code of Conduct Complaints-Local Assessment Framework

Consideration was given to statistical information regarding the number of complaints (4) received by the Borough Council relating to members conduct/behaviour for the period 1st April-1st December 2009. This compared to 10 complaints received for the period 8th May 2008-31st March 2009.

Details were provided of the Assessment Sub Committee's consideration of the complaints received; and it was noted that one complaint had been referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation and would ultimately be referred to the Consideration Sub Committee.

Nationally, a total of 3,586 Code of Conduct complaints had been recorded with Standards for England (SfE) between 8th May 2008 and 30th June 2009; equating to an average of 16 cases per authority. This Council had received 14 complaints during the period 8th May 2008 to 1st December 2009. Of the total number of complaints received nationally, 52.5% had resulted in no further action being taken, 29.5% had been referred to a Monitoring Officer for investigation, 11.7% referred for other action, 6% referred to the SfE for investigation and 0.3% to another local authority.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**PCL
23/09**

Issues Raised by Parish/Town Councils

The Forum received two questions, one from Egglecliffe and Eaglescliffe Parish Council and one from Ingleby Barwick Parish Council.

The first question related to the involvement envisaged by the Borough Council

for Parish/Town Councils to participate in any planned Armed Forces Day events scheduled for 2010. The Borough Council confirmed that Armed Forces Day would take place in Stockton on the 24 June 2010, the main event being the Freedom Parade by the Yorkshire Regiment starting at 2.00pm. In the main High Street throughout the day there would be various military information stands from across the 3 services. The detail of the event was still in the planning process and there may be a church service to start the day.

The Ministry of Defence had stated that they would like the Armed Forces Day flag flown in as many public places as possible, the flag raising in Stockton would take place at the Town Hall on the 21 June 2010 at 10.30 am. If the Parish/Town Councils would like to do their own flag raising ceremony they could, but they may have to buy their flag, and details were provided from where these could be obtained.

The second question related to what plans the Borough Council had in mind for expanding the number of Primary School places in Ingleby Barwick; along with clarification of the spare capacity, if any, in each of the Primary Schools and a progress update on Building Schools for the Future in the South of the Borough.

It was explained that Four schools in Ingleby Barwick were near capacity in some year groups at present:-

Ingleby Mill
Myton Park
St Francis of Assisi
St Therese of Lisieux

Barley Fields was likely to reach capacity by 2014/15 when all year groups were full and Whinstone was likely to remain short of capacity by about 30 places up to 2014/15. Overall there were currently over 200 spare places across Ingleby Barwick schools and projections show a possible pressure by 2015.

The project to replace all the mobiles at Whinstone was currently being planned and, subject to approval, was due to start on site in Summer 2010. This would add a further 80 places thus ensuring spare capacity should projections understate the position.

The Council's Building Schools for the Future team was conducting a feasibility study into some additional options for provision of places in the South of the Borough. The study was ongoing and would report to Cabinet in the Spring.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.