

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE & LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

MINUTES of the meeting of the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel held on Wednesday, 12 November 2014 at 6.00 pm at the Guildhall, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Julie Swan (in the Chair)

Councillors Ben Dowling
Lee Hunt

32. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Simon Boshier, Matthew Winnington and Hannah Hockaday.

33. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

34. Minutes of Previous Meeting - 22 October 2014 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the EDCL Scrutiny Panel meeting of 22 October 2014 be approved as a correct record.

35. Review - Revitalising local high streets and secondary shopping centre areas in the city (AI 4)

Traders Associations

The Chair welcomed traders representatives Tobi Stidolph & John Pryde (Castle Road) and Jenni Catlow (Albert Road) to the meeting and they were asked for their views on how the Council could help give support to the traders, whilst not raising expectations regarding budgetary provision.

Jenni Catlow wished to raise the idea of encouraging walking and cycling to **Albert Road** by making it one way for traffic to provide extended cycle routes, to connect to Clarendon Road, Osborne Road and Festing. The Chair felt that this scale of change may be outside the remit of this review but could be passed as a suggestion to Councillor Ken Ellcome as the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation. It was also reported that the Cycle Forum were being invited to a future meeting to seek their views as part of this review.

It was reported that **Fratton Traders** were now establishing and Councillor Swan and Barry Walker were attending their meetings.

At **Castle Road** Tobi Stidolph also suggested there be consideration of making the road one-way north to south to improve the area and allow extra

parking, and even give consideration to pedestrianisation for the southern end. Whilst pedestrianisation was favoured by some traders in the city it did not have the support of others (as had been evident at Palmerston Road). He reported on traffic problems there, especially with lorries using the narrow road and the inconsiderate parking over driveways and for prolonged periods over the double yellow lines in an area which should be 1 hour parking. This would be referred to Michael Robinson as the Parking Operations Manager to consider further enforcement.

Discussion then took place about the organisation of the **Castle Road Festival** - the traders contributed £10 each per month and businesses were asked to pay for a pitch.

John Pryde expanded on his experience having relocated from Stirling where he had been involved in the Business Group there working to bring the public and private sector together and to encourage traders to take more responsibility for looking after their own patches. Entrepreneurs were brought together to participate in events, to capitalise on locality. He had been impressed by Tobi Stidolph's enthusiasm in organising the Easter event in Castle Road which attracted people through food and simple entertainment. He stressed that setting up a traders association was relatively easy but its success would be reliant upon its members to make an effort and believe in it. The council could support initiatives by removing barriers to events - so that procedures were stream-lined such as for road closures. When Tobi had suggested widening the area of the Castle Road events up to the Clock Tower this had been rejected on traffic management issues (disabled parking provision) and environmental health had voiced concerns regarding the noise - the events ran up to 9pm.

An event that had become a victim of its own success and had become unmanageable had been the '**Love Albert Road Day**', where the rubbish and anti-social behaviour had upset local residents and the main beneficiaries had been the drinking vendors rather than local traders. It has also been costly for policing. This had however help spark other successful and well managed events in the city such as 'Victorious'. Jenni Catlow was pleased that smaller events were taking place in Albert Road such as Daisy Chain (the Daisy Chain Festival in June 2014 was a combination of creative and family-orientated events).

The traders would therefore welcome more joined-up thinking at the council and the panel felt that ward councillors could act as a helpful point of contact to improve communication. The panel members were keen for there to be a more **structured format** to help facilitate the small to medium sized events being pursued by the local traders. They had heard evidence of problems caused by lorries using the smaller roads and making deliveries which could be at more restricted times. Barry Walker stressed that the police would see local events as community events, so for the Christmas lights switch-on at Cosham High Street private security would be used.

The atmosphere of events was important and the Southsea food markets had been popular. Tony Broome of **Cosham TA** had commented that Monday

was a successful day for their shops due to the local market being held that day. His written comments had also included observations on the impact of parking charges and that the streetscape should be of a reasonable quality and well maintained - which linked to some of the areas covered in Stephen Baily's report (referred to in next section). Whilst it was hard to accurately calculate the increase in footfall caused as a result of these events the intention was to create the feeling of a place to spend more time in and have a range of expertise retained in these areas. John Pryde hoped to take a measure of attendees at the forthcoming Albert Road Christmas Festival.

Cultural Assets

A paper was circulated at the meeting, written by Stephen Baily the Head of City Development & Cultural Services. Lindy Elliott the Library & Archive Services Manager, was present to speak about this and the **library services**. She had spoken previously with Councillor Swan regarding her ideas as Chair of EDCL for more use of the libraries and in particular the use of the mobile library - such as for a Santa's grotto.

Southsea Library was a successful example of a library/cultural offer moving into a retail centre, and in its first year there had been a 4% increase in footfall identified (as reported to Culture, Leisure & Sport portfolio on 10 February 2012). Lindy Elliott had received feedback from parents that they extended shopping visits by rewarding their children with visits to the library for events such as 'Rhyme Time'. Her librarian colleagues nationally had undertaken research that showed that libraries do benefit shopping areas.

A flyer for the newly launched **mobile library service** (from 1 September 2014) outlined the scheduled timetable Monday to Friday and venues for the service:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Morning</u>	<u>Afternoon</u>
Monday	Drayton Lane/Havant Rd	Paulsgrove - Ludlow Rd
Tuesday	individual deliveries	Eastney - Fort Cumb. Rd
Wednesday	London Road	Mayfield Rd/Copnor Rd
Thursday	Farlington (Sainsburys)	Anchorage Park (Morrisons)
Friday	North Harbour (Tesco)	Drayton Lane/Havant Road

The mobile bus provided books and talking books for all age ranges. It would not run over the Christmas period and was not scheduled for the weekends but other stops could be considered, but with extra scheduling there would be staff resource implications. Responsible and fully qualified drivers were needed for events.

The wider library service had been involved in the annual BookFest - this was not privately sponsored but there was a partnership link with the Hayling Island Bookshop. John Pryde suggested that there may be backing available through publishers' corporate social responsibility funds where educational projects are identified; this would be investigated by Lindy Elliott.

Discussion took place regarding relocation of libraries into shopping areas - whilst this had worked at Southsea there would be large resource implications at other venues, and there could be other constraints (e.g. the Carnegie Library incorporated a charity, the Cosham Library had been the subject of proposals to move this to the shopping area but this had not been universally backed).

Stephen Baily's paper outlined ideas for community outreach work within the **museums** service, as well as links with the University of Portsmouth for the show-casing of art and suggested the submission of a Heritage Lottery funding bid to enable cultural uses in empty units.

Councillor Hunt suggested that 'Strong Island' be invited to a future meeting.

It was also reported that Tangier Road would be holding a Christmas fayre.

Town Centre Management

The written papers provided by Alan Cufley and Barry Walker had been sent out with the agenda which outlined the areas of responsibility for Barry as the City Centre Manager. Whilst he did not cover the local centres he did try to help where possible e.g. providing Christmas lights for Castle Road where it was shown that traders were working together. He reported that future events planned included a Small Business Day in December, a shopping Festival in September and supporting a 'shop local' event to highlight independent traders in July.

Future issues

The chair wanted more information on the occupancy rate of shops and to look further at the use of empty shops, and would meet with Kathy Wadsworth as the Strategic Director for Regeneration.

The panel members felt that the message from the traders was that small things could make a difference, and communication was key. It was noted that the public events notice had been reduced to 12 pages but this could still be intimidating the first time it was completed. Road closures were not always expensive but needed to be planned well in advance.

Councillor Dowling reported that in his ward some community events were funded by the ward councillors pooling their allocated ward initiatives funding.

36. Date of next meeting (AI 5)

It was agreed that the next EDCL Scrutiny Panel meeting take place on Tuesday 16th December at 5.15pm at the Civic Offices. The witnesses to be invited would primarily be PCC officers.

The meeting concluded at 7.55 pm.

Councillor Julie Swan
Chair