

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SEAHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

HELD ON TUESDAY 27 JANUARY 2009

Present: **Representing the District Council:**
Chair - Councillor C Walker
Councillors D Myers, F Shaw, E Bell, Mrs S Forster, A
Napier, B Burn

Also Present: R Blair – Seaham Health Forum
R Arthur – Durham County Council
Mrs J Walker – Seaham Town Council
Mrs J Bell – Seaham Town Council
B Allen – Seaham Town Council

Residents: E R Armbrister, T Collins, B Maddison, B Mawson,
P Mawson, B Bleasdale, Mrs Collins, B Gougle,
E Hope, B Wood

Officers: V Addison – Durham Constabulary
R Smith – Durham Constabulary
C Ridley – District of Easington
J Murphy – District of Easington
T Forster – District of Easington
J Yorke – District of Easington
S Gwilym – District of Easington

Apologies: E Mason, Mrs S Mason, Mrs G Bleasdale and G M Morris

1. CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the District Council's Seaham Neighbourhood Forum and introduced himself and the Officers present.

The Chair advised that this Forum had been established to provide the community of Seaham with an opportunity to comment on and shape services provided by public authorities including the Police and the District Council.

2. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 18 November 2008, a copy of which had been circulated, were agreed.

3. NEW DRIVE, SEAHAM

The Chair advised that a delegation of residents from East Shore Village were present at the meeting to discuss their concerns regarding the condition of New Drive, Seaham.

Mr B Cogle, a resident of East Shore Village was concerned at the poor condition of the road and advised that 9 to 10 months ago he had fallen over one of the pot holes in the road. He subsequently reported this to the Council but received no response and would like to see the pot holes in-filled.

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Mr B Bleasdale advised that he had lived at Tintagel Drive for 12 years and was very concerned at the deterioration of the road and the lack of adequate lighting. It was explained that only recently new fencing had been stolen from the roadway and the area had seen increased fly tipping of rubbish.

Mr B Maddison provided photographs which showed the condition of the road and reiterated that lighting was badly needed. In addition there was also a lack of signage to direct visitors and tourists leaving the railway station.

Mr Collins pointed out that the road was in a dangerous condition. The road was used by both residents, many with children, and vehicles and due to the lack of lighting and the number of pot holes it was only a matter of time before someone was hurt.

Mr R Armbrister pointed out that residents of East Shore Village regularly used the road to access the railway station and visitors to the cricket club had to use the road which was particularly bad at night due to the lack of lighting. The lack of lighting also added to the problems related to anti social behaviour in the area and had resulted in a number of attacks on the cricket club.

A Forster, Regeneration Projects Manager, advised that whilst the road was not adopted it was a Bridleway and as such Durham County Council could be requested to undertake repairs. It was acknowledged that following the development of approximately 600 houses at East Shore Village there had been a significant increase in pedestrians using the roadway. Residents also used the road to access the recreational facilities at New Drive.

It was suggested that as the road was used by both pedestrians and cars a formal footpath from the railway station to the western entrance of East Shore Village, along New Drive would help segregate pedestrians and vehicles using the route.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** that A Forster contact Durham County Council and request that the road be inspected and repaired and that further consideration be given to the possibility of a formal footpath being provided from the railway station to the western entrance of East Shore Village.

4. **SEAHAM AGENDA FOR ACTION**

(i) **Visible Police Presence**

The Chair welcomed Inspector V. Addison and Sgt. R. Smith from Durham Constabulary to the meeting.

V Addison advised that with regard to drugs the situation in Seaham was no different to anywhere else. He had previously reported to this meeting the successful seizures of cannabis that had taken place.

There had recently been an operation carried out in Seaham which was one of the biggest operations ever staged, and had involved over 90 Police. The operation had led to the arrest of 15 known drug dealers who were supplying heroin in the town, most of those were charged and would serve jail sentences. R Smith had led this multi agency operation which had been a success. The operation had also involved 20 members of the community who were involved in every aspect of the operation.

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It was explained that recorded crime in Seaham had reduced by 15%. By the end of the year that would equate to 300 less crimes across the board. Detection rates were also up 30%.

At the last meeting discussion had taken place regarding a scheme in Cornwall where the Police were authorised to distribute sweeping brushes to youths who were causing trouble and discarding rubbish in the streets. V Addison advised that he was investigating the legal position with regard to human rights issues.

It was explained that last Year the Police had identified 4 areas which required specific targeting, one of these areas was Deneside and since that time every measurement related to ASB, theft, criminal damage, Youth related disorder, car theft etc had reduced and Deneside was now a much safer area than it was a year ago.

The Police continued to carry out test purchases on off licences in the area and it was pleasing to note that many off licences would not sell alcohol to underage youths. Those that did and were caught were given warnings and/or fined.

P Mawson asked for an update with regard to off road motor bikes. V Addison advised that the Police had seized a number of bikes and issued statutory warnings, they had also crushed a number of bikes. P Mawson acknowledged that it had been quieter but felt this could be attributed to the dark nights.

Councillor B Burn raised the issue of motorists parking on the pavements and the problems it caused. V Addison acknowledged that parking was a problem in Seaham and Sgt Smith would be investigating.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) **Regulation of “Off Licence” Premises**

C Ridley outlined in detail the application process carried out by the District of Easington in relation to off licence applications.

The procedure for objecting to an application was explained and it was pointed out that anyone could object to an application but it had to be an objection based around one of the 4 licensing objectives, details of which were outlined.

C Ridley explained that following Local Government Review the new Authority would adopt a new Statement of Policy in respect of the Licensing Act 2003. Prior to this each District Council had its own Statement. Copies of the new Statement were available at the meeting.

Once a licence was approved it was enforced by the District Council's Licensing Unit. This Unit carried out many afterhours enforcement visits and had the power to take action against those found to be contravening their licence.

Discussion took place in relation to those premises that were known to be selling alcohol to underage customers and the issues around targeting

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individual properties. Residents with any concerns should contact either Easington District Council or the Police.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** that the information given, be noted.

(iii) **Area Action Partnerships**

J Murphy, LSP Manager advised that during 2008 public consultation events were held to discuss the newly proposed Area Action Partnerships (AAP's) which would replace the East Durham Local Strategic Partnership on 1 April 2009. It was proposed that 14 AAP's would cover the whole of the county. The Easington AAP was based largely on the same geographical area as the current District of Easington. The only change was that Trimdon Foundry would be merged into the Rural East Durham AAP.

AAP's were proposed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of partnership working, and were to be run by an Area Board and an all encompassing Area Forum. It had been decided that each AAP Board's membership would be a "thirds model" made up of;

- One third Elected Members
- One third representatives of partner organisations i.e. the County Council, the Police, the PCT, The Fire Service, a VCS umbrella organisation, a business representative and a relevant major social housing provider
- One third members of the public

Each "third" would consist of 7 representatives, limiting the overall board size to 21 members. Boards could also co-op individuals from outside of the full membership for specific time bound tasks.

The Area Forum would meet twice a year and would be open to everyone. The purpose of this meeting would be to determine the priorities and agree an annual local plan for the area. The Area Boards would meet initially on a monthly basis to consider issues such as service delivery against the local plan and manage and monitor the budget.

Any Member of the public who had registered with the AAP Forum would be eligible to apply for a Board position possibly via open advert. The positions were not paid but expenses would be met.

With regard to the future of the existing Area Forums it was acknowledged that there would be a need for engagement below this level and there were currently a number of options being considered and further discussion with relevant parties would be undertaken.

Councillor R Arthur stated that there were still a lot of decisions to be made regarding the AAP's particularly around budgets.

J Murphy explained that there were 2 funding mechanisms. There was a proposal that each AAP would be allocated £250,000, £100,000 for staffing costs and £150,000 that could be used to engage with the community on how they could influence spending. There would also be a Member budget

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that would be aligned to the priorities agreed by the Board. There was concern that as the AAP's were of varying size in terms of population the budget allocated to each AAP should reflect this.

B Blair expressed concern at the budget and make up of the Board, particularly in relation to how members of the public would be appointed.

Councillor E Bell advised that the AAP's were in the very early stages of development and would need time to develop and grow. The timescales were tight but the AAP's would be flexible and could be changed if needed. It was important that the process included everyone.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

JT/CB/SNF/090101
28.01.09